Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library
BS605 .A73
Armstrong, Robert Allen, 1860- MAIN
Mastering the books of the Bible / by Ro
3 9967 00102 2925

MASTERING THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

BY

ROBERT ALLEN ARMSTRONG, L.H.D.

Head of the Department of English of
West Virginia University

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

NATHAN C. SCHAEFFER, LL.D.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction
of Pennsylvania

NEW YORK
THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

13081

Copyright, 1916,
By ROBERT ALLEN ARMSTRONG

BS605
A23

TO
MY WIFE
MYRA LOUISE

PREFACE

It is the object of this book to aid those who would like to master a book of the Bible as they master a secular classic, to get at its great message and at the same time enjoy its wonderful literature. The author will attempt to give this aid by showing the value, significance, and beauty of Bible literature; by furnishing materials out of which the student may construct the proper setting, atmosphere and background for his reading; by presenting and explaining a fruitful method of study; and by giving many type-studies to illustrate the application of this method.

It will be observed that the word Bible is used in these pages as if all of the sixty-six books were included in the studies; but the fact is that the illustrative type-studies are all taken from the Old Testament.

Most of the Bible quotations are from the Authorized Version because it is real English literature; but other versions have been used when the meaning of particular lines and passages could be made clearer.

A large part of the material of the chapters of the book has been accumulated in the form of lectures given in a course of study which has been offered for a number of years at West Virginia University.

Special thanks are due to my colleagues, Professor Simeon C. Smith, Dr. L. D. Arnett, and Professor David Dale Johnson, who have given the author valuable advice and have kindly read the manuscript.

R. A. A.

Morgantown, W. Va., January 1, 1916.

INTRODUCTION

In the year 1913 the Pennsylvania legislature passed an act requiring in every public school the daily reading of at least ten verses from the Holy Bible and imposing upon school directors the duty of dismissing every teacher who fails to comply with this legislation. While this legislation was pending, it was predicted outside of the State that its enactment into law would be followed by riots and bloodshed. The prediction has not been fulfilled. The history of Pennsylvania has never been stained by the burning of witches nor by any other form of religious persecution. The teachers have shown themselves to be law-abiding citizens, and the people although professing many and various creeds, have shown a most commendable spirit of religious toleration as well as a most remarkable appreciation of the value of daily Bible reading.

It was of course not the aim of the legislature to introduce religious teaching into the public schools. The duty of teaching religion belongs to the home, to the Sunday school, and to the church with its various agencies. Teachers in high schools and colleges have sometimes been known to go out of their way for the purpose of throwing doubt upon the religious faith of the pupil or the pupil's parents. A worse service can not be rendered by those who are engaged in education. Destroy the sense of obligation to a supreme being and you have robbed the child of one of the strongest incentives to an upright life.

In eight or nine of the States the Bible has been excluded from the public schools either by decisions of the supreme court of the State, or by opinions of its attorney general, or by rulings of the state superintendent of schools. It does not follow that such exclusion necessarily makes the schools godless. The schools become god-

less when put in charge of godless teachers. As long as the fear of God and the love of righteousness abide in the teacher's heart, so long can it be assumed and asserted that the schools are not godless. Nevertheless, the child loses much if it grows up without the molding influence of the daily reading of the Book of books. Abraham Lincoln had access to few books in his early life. But the marvelous English of King James's version permeated his thinking and molded his diction. A letter from his pen written to a mother who had lost five sons in the Civil War, is treasured at Oxford University as the finest specimen of letter writing in the English language. His Gettysburg speech has been read and studied as a masterpiece of English in thousands of our public schools and bears unmistakable testimony to the molding influence of the literary style of the English Bible. When Kossuth was preparing to visit England and America, he studied three books, Johnson's dictionary, the writings of Shakespeare, and the King James version of the Bible. His eloquent command of English gave him unrivaled power over the audiences which he addressed in the United States. Father Faber who renounced Protestantism and joined the Catholic Church, says, of our English Bible: "Who will say that the uncommon beauty and marvelous English of the Protestant Bible is not one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells which the convert scarcely knows how he can forego. Its felicities seem often to be almost things rather than words. It is part of a national mind and the author of the national seriousness. Nay, it is worshiped with a positive idolatry, in extenuation of whose fanaticism its intrinsic beauty pleads availingly with the scholar. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. It is the representative of a man's best moments; all that there has been about him of soft and gentle and pure and penitent and good speaks to him forever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing which doubt never dimmed and controversy never soiled, and in the length and breadth of

the land there is not one Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible."

Of course everything depends upon the spirit and the way in which the Bible is read. I have seen it read amid so much noise and irreverence that the reading had better been omitted. The Old Testament may be studied for the sake of finding questionable cases of morality in the lives of David and Solomon and the Patriarchs. Such study may be harmful to youths in the adolescent period. The inhabitants of India study the English Bible in order that they may understand Milton's "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" and other English classics. Surely such study of biblical literature is justifiable. Teachers of pedagogy sometimes use the Bible to show the wisdom in the methods of the greatest teacher of all the ages. Such use is very helpful to teachers. But the legislation which prescribes the daily reading of the Bible in the public schools has undoubtedly a different aim. The Bible is the loftiest code of ethics which the human race possesses. It should be read and studied for purposes of moral instruction and devotional uplift.

The parent or the teacher who expects the daily reading of ten verses from the sacred Scriptures to solve the problem of moral training will of course be disappointed. The Bible may be abused. A pious father, when his son was bad, made him learn ten Bible verses by heart, and when the boy was very bad, he had to memorize and recite one hundred verses. He grew up hating the Bible as an instrument of punishment, and his adult years have been very unsatisfactory from the ethical point of view. Moreover, much biblical knowledge does not touch the heart out of which are the issues of life. For instance, the fact that the books of the Bible were originally not divided into chapters and verses, that the division into chapters was made in the early part of the thirteenth century, and that the division of the chapters into verses was made after the art of printing had been invented (about the middle of the sixteenth century) by a printer on horseback fleeing from Paris to Switzerland to

escape persecution,—this is interesting information, but it does not shape the life and conduct of the individual nor lift him to higher planes of effort and aspiration. Moreover, for ethical purposes biblical literature should be supplemented by other instruction. The Bible does not tell the reader to brush his teeth or to avoid the cigarette habit, and yet these are, for the youth, duties as imperative as going to church or saying his prayers. The secular literature which the ages have produced contains much which we can not afford to despise or neglect in the ethical training of the young. This admission does not detract one iota from the importance of daily reading of the sacred Scriptures.

The Protestant Reformation is based upon two cardinal principles: 1. Man is justified by faith. 2. The Bible is the only rule of religious faith and practice. If the Bible is to be a guide to faith and conduct, it must be read and studied and understood. Herein lay the prime motives for the establishment of schools for the common people. Schmid's Encyclopædia is authority for the statement that as early as 1640 it was impossible in Sweden to find any one above the age of ten who was unable to read and write. In the court records of Upland (now Chester) where the Swedes first settled on the Delaware River, there is given the action of a teacher who recovered pay from a father who had agreed to pay two hundred guilders if his children were taught to read the Scriptures in a specified number of months. Facts like these show the stress that was laid by the early settlers upon the knowledge of the Bible. And that stress is being renewed through the attention which the twentieth century is concentrating upon the Old and New Testaments.

The ensuing treatise on the literature of the Old Testament is evidence of the revival of interest in the books of the Bible. A lecturer at a teachers' institute spoke of the beautiful story of Ruth, a teacher of English in the high school who had graduated from a university, asked the name of the publisher; she did not even know the names of the books of the Old Testament. How teachers can manage to teach English literature where the Bible has been excluded from the school, is a

problem which modern pedagogy has been unable to solve. If this volume serves to point out anew what every intelligent man should know about the Old Testament, if it helps to give parents, teachers, and pupils a better appreciation of the Bible narratives and their value from a literary as well as an ethical point of view, if it brings the reader to a more adequate conception of the thoughts and ideas which lie at the foundation of Christian civilization, and if it succeeds in emphasizing the beauties and verities upon which the saints of all the ages have fed their souls, it will prove, we may confidently hope, a most important contribution to our educational literature. Two quotations must suffice to show the value of such a contribution. "A gilt-clasped Bible," says Arnold Bennett, "is the secret of England's greatness." "When the history of twentieth-century culture shall be written," adds Professor Rankin, "no feature of that culture will be more noteworthy than the increasingly conscious recognition of the unclasped Bible as an impelling force and guide in the life of men of Anglo-Saxon civilization."

NATHAN C. SCHAEFFER.

Harrisburg, Pa.
March 30, 1916.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE 5

INTRODUCTION 7

CHAPTER I METHOD OF MASTERY 17

Present-day ignorance of the Bible. Not an open book for the people. Preliminary preparation. General knowledge of value and significance. Circumstances of time and place. Mood and purpose of each author. Correctness and authenticity of texts. Reading books as wholes. Wrong methods of study. The synthetic method. General directions. Four typical analyses: of Genesis, of Judges, of Amos and of The Stories of the Two Prophets.

CULTURE VALUE OF THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER II ITS EDUCATIONAL VALUE 35

Its emphasis on the value of human life. Its solutions of the practical problems of life. Its rich materials for nourishing the life of the spirit. Its provision for the cultivating of man's æsthetic nature. Its high moral ideals, individual and national.

CHAPTER III ITS VALUE AS LITERATURE 44

The critical study of the books of the Bible not irreverent. Their message made clear by such study. The impress of this literature left on secular literature and everyday speech. Acquaintance with Bible literature the best preparation for the interpretation of secular literature. Interesting reading in rich and satisfying perfection. The best examples of great literature. A literature of power.

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER IV ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE 59

The books have a natural and a supernatural history. Materials and composition. Old manuscript copies. The canon. Ancient versions. English versions.

CHAPTER V RESUME OF THE CONTENTS OF EACH BOOK . . 70

The books of the Pentateuch. The historical books. The books of poetry. The books of the Major Prophets. The books of the Minor Prophets.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES.

CHAPTER VI CHARACTERISTICS OF OLD TESTAMENT STORIES 89
The Great Teacher's use of stories. Valuable for many purposes: To entertain, to instruct, to portray life, to teach moral lessons, to furnish material for the education of children. Illustrative stories: Samson and the Philistines, The Offering of Isaac, The Fable of the Trees, The One Ewe Lamb.

CHAPTER VII GENESIS AS A STORY BOOK FOR CHILDREN . 95
Characteristics of these stories that make them suitable for children. The Great Separation, or Paradise and the Fall. Cain and Abel: A Lesson of Self-Control. Noah and the Flood.

CHAPTER VIII THE BOOK OF RUTH 105
The story. Analysis and Comment.

CHAPTER IX THE BOOK OF ESTHER 113
The story. Analysis and Comment.

CHAPTER X THE BOOK OF JONAH 124
The story. Analysis and Comment.

OLD TESTAMENT POETRY.

CHAPTER XI CHARACTERISTICS OF OLD TESTAMENT POETRY 131
Noble qualities of Hebrew poetry. Its form. Shorter lyrics. Greater poems. A study of David's Lament. A study of the Song of Deborah.

CHAPTER XII THE BOOK OF PSALMS 142
Divisions, five books. The number of the psalms. Gradual growth of the Hebrew Psalter. Titles of individual psalms. The psalms of David. Interpretation of individual psalms: Psalm I, Psalm XXIV, Psalm XIX, Psalm XXIX.

CHAPTER XIII THE BOOK OF JOB 153
Authorship. A great drama. Its theme. The characters of the drama. Divisions of the drama. Interpretation of the poem: (1) The prologue; (2) the debate; (3) Elihu's interposition; (4) the Voice out of the whirlwind; (5) the epilogue; (6) problems of the book and solutions offered.

CHAPTER XIV THE SONG OF SONGS 166
Difficulties of interpretation. A series of wedding songs. A drama with two, or three, characters. A brief synopsis of the story.

Interpretation in five acts and thirteen scenes:
Introductory information.
Act I, King Solomon tries to win favor of captive Shulamite.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Act II. She declares her devotion to her shepherd lover.

Act III. The Shulamite taken to Jerusalem with the court.

Act IV. She still protests her allegiance to her shepherd lover.

Act V. Love has won. The Shulamite returns to her lover and her vineyards.

Comments on the form and meaning of the poem.

Appreciation of the Song by Canon Driver.

BOOKS OUTSIDE THE CANON.

CHAPTER XV OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA 177

Definition of the term Apocrypha. Brief account of each of the fourteen Apocryphal compositions of the Old Testament. The Book of Ecclesiasticus. Additions to the Book of Daniel: The Story of Susanna, the Story of Bel and the Dragon, Daniel in the Lion's Den. The Book of Judith. The Book of Tobit.

APPENDIX.

SECTION 1 GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE 193

SECTION 2 A BRIEF OUTLINE OF HEBREW HISTORY . . . 196

SECTION 3 THE CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING OF THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT 199

SECTION 4 LIST OF THE GREAT STORIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT 202

SECTION 5 THE BIBLE STUDENT'S LIBRARY 204

MASTERING THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER I

METHOD OF MASTERY

Amos, in the eighth chapter of his prophecy, makes the following declaration: "Behold, the day is come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; and they shall wander from sea to sea and from the North even to the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it."

If one were inclined to be pessimistic and satirical, he might interpret this passage by saying that Amos looked forward to these days and had in mind the woeful ignorance of the Bible which prevails to-day. It is hard to explain why such a condition exists but may it not be accounted for partly by the methods we use in studying the Bible? We do not read it or study it as we do any other book, yet it ought not to be thought irreverent to study it as closely and critically as we do any secular book, and to use the same methods that are used with success in the interpretation of secular masterpieces.

There is no question that the Bible was intended to be an open book for the people, but it does not yield its meaning to a careless or superficial reader, not even to a very earnest one, unless he uses an effective method. It is the object of this volume to present such a method. It may be called the "literary and historical" method as opposed to the "theological and textual" method. It

aims to get at the meaning of passages and books as one would interpret the meaning of secular literature. The method requires careful preliminary preparation in order that the student may bring to his study knowledge with which to interpret what is new, and enthusiasm to sustain him in his difficulties.

In the first place, if the student is convinced that there is "pay ore" in the mine he is going to work, he will go at his task with assured zeal. Chapters II and III of this volume are presented for the purpose of showing what a rich mine of material for education and culture is found in the old Hebrew volume. An effort is made to impress the reader with the fact that when he is studying these books he is becoming acquainted with a volume that has influenced the intellectual, spiritual, æsthetic, and practical life of the world as no other volume has ever done. He should approach his study knowing and feeling this wonderful fact.

Another thing of equal importance is that the reader should put himself, as far as possible, in the place of the author of each book, so that the circumstances of time and place, the mood and purpose of the author may aid him in getting at the genuine meaning of the book. The Bible had its origin in antiquity amid Oriental surroundings, and hence has local allusions liable to be misunderstood by people of later ages and Western lands. No other book in the world is more influenced by the surroundings and experiences of its writers. It is important, then, that the student of the Bible should learn something of the land in which it was written. He should be impressed with the fact that this book, which is a world book in its interest and application, came from a land which reproduces almost all the features of world geography. In order that the student may better understand the book, let him first read Section 1 of the Appendix of this volume as a sort of introduction to the geography of Palestine.

Although the Bible sets forth eternal truth, that truth is presented in the words and literary forms of particular ages, according to the modes of thought of particular periods of history and of a particular country.

So, if the student would discover its true meaning, he must put himself in the circumstances of the authors and try to think and feel as they did. As an aid to such sympathy and understanding Section 2 of the Appendix is offered. Here will be found a brief outline of Hebrew history and a condensed statement of that history as related to the different books of the Bible. There is given, also, a scheme of Hebrew chronology into which are fitted all the books of the Bible, each in its proper place. The chronology and circumstances of a book's origin are important because each epoch has its own special characteristics, and any national literature can not be understood except with a knowledge of the times which produced it. Of course biblical literature is different from other literatures in its wonderful inspiration, but it bears also the stamp of the general laws which influence any national literature; and acquaintance with the times in which it was produced is necessary to an accurate interpretation of its meaning and spirit. (Since these sections are for reference rather than for reading, they are placed in the Appendix.)

It is not necessary to say to the intelligent Bible reader that no man living has read the original copy of a single book of the Bible; but it is true, and all readers must depend upon copies, indeed upon copies of copies made through the centuries. It is somewhat reassuring, however, to know that we have a few copies of the Bible in manuscript form dating back more than 1500 years. Chapter IV, the Origin and Growth of the Books of the Bible, gives an account of three of these most precious manuscript copies, and the story of its origin, and miraculous preservation through its many linguistic transformations down the centuries.

Since the truths of the Bible are presented to us in the same literary forms that are used in secular literature, it is well that each book should be approached in somewhat the same way that a student approaches the study of a secular masterpiece. The first important thing to know, then, about a book of the Bible is its general literary character. What sort of literature is it? Is it prose or poetry? If poetry, is it epic, lyric, or

dramatic poetry? Is it historical narrative, drama, or proverbial philosophy? Does it set forth law, or parables, or prophecies? All these forms and many more are found in the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. To give the reader information concerning the nature and general character of the books of the Bible Chapter V of this volume is presented.

But the feature of the method here presented which needs most to be emphasized, is the reading of the books of the Bible as wholes. Very few readers, even conscientious and devoted students, have ever read a book of the Bible straight through. They fail to recognize the literary continuity of the books, though there most certainly is such continuity. When one reads secular books he begins at the beginning and takes things in their order. If he is studying Shakespeare's "Hamlet" he begins with the first scene of the first act, then takes the second, the third, the fourth, and the fifth scene in order, then the scenes of the second, third, fourth, and fifth acts, to the conclusion. He never thinks of reading a scene in the middle of one of Shakespeare's plays out of all connection with what goes before and what comes after, at least if he expects to get at the author's meaning. Yet that is the very thing he does in his study of the Bible.

The reader may try to persuade himself that he is doing conscientious work by studying isolated chapters and verses anywhere in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Can it be possible that these books of the Bible are not constructed like other books, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, with introduction, development, and conclusion, with order and arrangement, so that the first part lays the foundation for what follows, and the last part is better understood in the light of what has gone before? The fact is that these books of the Bible are just like other books in this respect. They are to be taken as units; there is the connecting thread which runs through from the beginning to the end; and it is absolutely necessary for one to study them in a logical way to keep from misunderstanding or misinterpreting many of the isolated passages. The light of the whole

chapter, the whole book, must be thrown on the individual passage or verse.

The division of the chapters of the English Bible into paragraph verses was an unfortunate thing. Although the Hebrew Bible had some such division, the Geneva Bible was the first English version that split up the chapters into paragraph verses and numbered them in order. It is evident that this method of printing the Bible has been productive of much ignorance concerning the real meaning, the larger truth, of many of its books. It has led to the use of the Bible as a sort of dictionary of religion, such an arrangement being admirably suited for this use. Indeed, to a great many persons, the Bible is simply a collection of texts to which they may go to gather ammunition now to bombard an enemy, now to defend themselves. The multiplication of sects and creeds in the world proves that almost any sort of doctrine can be supported, if one is allowed to select isolated passages and regard verses as having complete meaning when taken out of connection with chapter and book. It is too often the case that texts are interpreted without regard to their setting. A good illustration is the case of the Universalist divine who preached a sermon on immortality from the text "Thou shalt not surely die," entirely oblivious of the fact that these were the words which the Devil spoke to Eve, and that his sayings are not usually considered to be of unimpeachable orthodoxy. One may, for instance, quote a text from the Book of Job without explaining whether the words were spoken by Job or by one of his friends. For example, take these two passages: "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine"; and "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea are mighty in power? Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God against them." There is no reconciling these two passages unless there is taken into consideration the character of the Book of Job. The part of the book from which these quotations are taken is a debate. What Job affirms his friends deny; what they affirm he denies; they are fencing with one another. In such composition one would expect con-

tradictions. The only way to understand and reconcile the conflicting statements and opinions is to remember the character of that part of the book.

To illustrate the necessity of paying heed to the context in interpreting any passage, take a familiar quotation: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. XI:28). That is a beautiful and comforting text, but it has only the beauty of a fragment and the comfort of a misapprehension; for comfort is not promised on such easy terms. The context shows that there are other conditions that must be met: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." The invitation is not complete without these two additional sentences. Only one condition has been complied with when we have come to the Master; two others are necessary: submission and discipleship; we must bear His yoke and must learn of Him. Both of these things are included in the teaching. Coming and learning and service are equally important conditions in the attainment of the coveted rest.

While the Bible has many short, terse sayings packed with thought, many luminous texts, it is by no means a string of aphorisms. The reader can not be sure of his interpretation of sentence or verse until he has seen what leads up to it and to what subsequent thoughts it is linked. Much more satisfactory is his study if he extends his vision over the sentences of the context of a verse, over a whole chapter, a whole book; if he studies the Book of Job as a complete masterpiece; if he studies the Book of Revelation as a unit; if he looks upon the Gospel of Luke as being a continuous and complete narrative to be studied all together.

No one reads the lines of secular masterpieces as if they were complete in themselves and independent of setting and context; no one expects a single scene from "Hamlet" to give the author's meaning in that great play; no one expects a sentence from one of Burke's great speeches to supply an adequate notion of his statesmanlike grasp of thought; no one expects to get even partially a true impression of Daniel Webster unless he should read at least one of his great speeches. Why

should he not study the books of the Bible in the same way? Why should he not read Joshua as he reads Cæsar's "Commentaries"? Solomon's Song as he reads "Romeo and Juliet"? Job as he reads "Hamlet"? A great literary product is like a great masterpiece of architecture: the whole must stand out and be taken into account to reveal the master's thought.

> "Walk about Zion, and go round about her;
> Tell the towers thereof.
> Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces;
> That ye may tell it to the generations following."

The method of studying the Bible here recommended may be called the synthetic method. Such a method is both logical and pedagogical. In the study of geography, while it is proper to commence with a little home geography, after such a basis has been laid, the correct method is to begin with the globe itself, then study the hemispheres, continents, nations, and smaller divisions, in order. If one desires to get the best knowledge and the best view of a mountain region, he should go to the highest peak first, look out upon the whole range, and then he can intelligently and enthusiastically study the features of the lower levels in their relation to the whole area. Martin Luther said that he studied the Bible as he gathered apples. He shook the tree first, then the limbs, then the branches, and after that he reached out under the leaves for the remaining fruit. Such is the best method of study for the mastery of the books of the Bible.

The following suggestions will be helpful to any one who desires to follow out a plan of systematic study of the Bible for a year or longer, reading a few pages every day and a whole book when possible.

1. Begin at the beginning. It is much better to begin with Genesis and take the books in their regular order.

2. Read the book. It is not asked that it be studied in the ordinary sense, or memorized, or even understood fully at first; simply read it. The purpose is to make the task as easy and natural and pleasant as possible. It does not matter much how rapidly you read, for the time being, if you only read. There is a great deal of study

of the Bible by simply reading books that tell about the Bible.

3. Read it continuously. By continuously two things are meant: read the book uninfluenced by its division into chapters and verses; and second, read it at a single sitting if it is not too long. The reason for reading a book at a single sitting is that many of the books of the Bible have a single thread running through the whole and it is necessary to follow this thread continuously and unbrokenly.

4. Read it repeatedly. Mastery of a book can not be accomplished in one reading. Indeed the suggestion has been made in the second rule that the first reading may be rapid. By repeated readings the truth will grow upon one and a more familiar knowledge will make the whole book clearer and more impressive.

5. Read it independently. By independently is meant, first of all, that it should be read without reference to commentaries and outside aids. These are, of course, invaluable in their place, but in the mastery of the English Bible, according to the plan suggested here, their place is not before but after one has got an outline of a given book for himself. (The student will find these suggestions elaborated in Dr. James M. Gray's little book, How to Master the English Bible.)

The following brief analyses show the first steps in the method here presented. The analyses of the Book of Genesis, the Book of Judges, and the Book of Amos give the general survey with which the study of any book should begin and make clear the relation of the parts of each; the lesson plan for the study of the lives and deeds of the two great prophets, Elijah and Elisha. shows how related parts of books having so many threads of interests as the books of the Kings, may be brought together as a unit.

Analysis of the Book of Genesis

The Book of Genesis is divided into two parts. The first eleven chapters may bear the title: "The Beginnings of Things," the last thirty-nine, "The Story of the Chosen People as a Patriarchal Family." Of course only the main features, the central ideas, and the lead-

ing characters in the book can be touched upon in such a brief outline. The minor characters and incidents are numerous and interesting, but the first general view should be confined to the greatest and most significant facts and characters.

I. The Beginnings of Things.

1. The Story of Creation; a great poem, The Song of God and the Universe; not so much a revelation of fact as of spiritual truth.

2. Paradise and the Fall, the Story of Man's Separation from God; the most serious problem in the universe —Sin.

3. Cain and Abel, the Story of Self-Control. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

4. The Great Flood; corruption can not prevail on the earth; the bow of promise set in the heavens.

5. The Origin of Nations; the sin of man's arrogance divides the human race into jealous, warring nations.

II. The Chosen People as A Patriarchal Family. (XII–L.)

The history set forth in these thirty-nine chapters centers about the four great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The stories of the lives of these renowned men have shaped the ideals and the conduct of the Hebrew race through the succeeding centuries, and through the Bible have influenced the ideals and standards of the whole world.

1. Abraham. A pilgrim and a pioneer; a man of peace, yet a bold warrior; a man of faith, the father of the faithful; a man of noble character, perfected through testing and struggle.

2. Isaac. A child of promise; the man of non-resistance; the average man who was great in his quiet work and unobtrusive ways.

3. Jacob. A supplanter; a Hebrew Ulysses; a man of ambitions and ideals, changed by struggle and sobered by love and responsibility; a born leader; visions may encourage but only struggle can permanently change the character.

4. Joseph. A spoiled child, but a dreamer; a boy in Canaan, he becomes at once a man in Egypt; separation and responsibility make him strong and wise; he is noble and unselfish and generously loyal to his brothers. The Joseph stories are dramatic, vivid, and striking; there is profound feeling, and a pathos that tugs at the heart-strings, incidents of deep human interest, all set forth in a style simple, picturesque, and charming.

Analysis of the Book of Judges

The Book of Judges is fragmentary and yet is composed according to a plan, definite though artificial. It may be divided into three parts, the preface, chapters I to III: 6; the body of the book, consisting of illustrative stories, chapters III: 7 to XVI; and the appendix, chapters XVII to XXI.

I. The preface presents first, accounts of several disconnected events of the time of the conquest, with a second account of the death of Joshua; second, reflections upon the history to be narrated in the body of the book and a formula according to which the history of the period repeats itself. The formula is: The Israelites fall into sin, are conquered by some neighboring tribe, and subjected to grievous oppression; they repent, reform, become strong, drive out their enemies and enjoy a period of peace and prosperity, only to fall again into sin and to repeat the old formula of subjection, oppression, repentance, reformation, victory, and temporary prosperity.

II. The body of the book gives accounts varying in length, of seven oppressions by foreign conquerors, and one usurpation by an ambitious Ephraimite. These stories are vigorous and vivid and the actors in the rough and daring deeds recorded are living, breathing men and women who win our admiration and sympathy.

1. Israel is conquered by Chushan-Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, remains in subjection eight years, is delivered by Othniel, and enjoys peace for a period of forty years. (Chapt. III: 7–11.)

2. Israel is made subject to Eglon, king of Moab, for

eighteen years, is freed by the strategy of Ehud, and has peace for eighty years. (Chapt. III: 12–30.)

3. Shamgar delivers the Israelites from the oppression of the Philistines by slaying 600 of them with an ox-goad. (III: 31.)

4. Jabin, king of Canaan, rules Israel for twenty years. Then his army under Sisera is defeated by Deborah and Barak at the battle of Mount Tabor, and the land has rest for forty years. (IV–V.)

5. The Midianites rule Israel for seven years with such severity that the condition of the people is unbearable. Gideon, a cautious but most valiant man, conducts a vigorous campaign against the invaders and the land has rest for forty years.

6. Abimelech, the son of Gideon, by the help of the men of his own family usurps the government, kills his brothers and has a troubled reign of three years.

7. The Philistines and Ammonites oppress Israel for eighteen years. Israel is relieved by Jephthah's successful campaign against the Ammonites and enjoys rest for thirty-one years.

8. Again the sins of the Israelites deliver them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. Samson is sent as a judge to the oppressed people, and his eccentric career through twenty years opens the way for the more serious and successful rule of the judge and priest Samuel.

III. The appendix (XVII–XXI), consists of two stories of Israelitish life showing the lawless and unsettled condition of things in the days of the judges. The first story tells of Micah and his Levite priest and the emigration to the north of a band of the Danites. The second story is an account of an outrage committed by the Gibeathites in revenge for which the tribe of Benjamin is almost annihilated by the other tribes of Israel.

Analysis of the Book of Amos

This book is placed third in the regular list of the Minor Prophets, but in point of time it should be first. It is the first of the written prophecies of the Bible and

in it Amos originated a new school of prophecy. The book has unity and follows a well defined plan.

The personality of the prophet and the circumstances under which he uttered these prophecies are important in interpreting the book. Amos says of himself: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go prophesy unto my people Israel." Although he disclaims connection with the professional prophets and was a man of very humble rank, he had keenness of insight, breadth of mind, and wide knowledge of the world. He had command of a logic, a power of speech, and an eloquence that compelled unwilling auditors to attend to his message.

The work of Amos was done about the middle of the eighth century B. C., in the midst of the great military successes and prosperity of Jeroboam II. But prosperity brought great moral evils in its train. The rich lived in luxury and vice. Their wealth was obtained through violence and robbery. The poor and needy were sold as slaves, and honesty in business was unknown. Justice was impossible for the poor because the judges were notoriously corrupt. The nation regarded its general prosperity as a mark of Jehovah's favor and of his approval of their corrupt lives and evil practices. It was in the midst of these conditions that Amos came from his home at Tekoa in Judea, appeared at the sanctuary in Bethel, and in burning words and striking imagery proclaimed to the wondering people that justice between man and man and between nation and nation is one of the divine foundations of society and that the people of Israel were doomed because justice was not to be found among them. There are four natural divisions of the Book of Amos:

I. Indictment of Heathen Nations (I and II).

Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Judah, are all guilty of sins against common humanity. Their punishment is sure. Israel, too, shall be punished because she has broken a holier law. In these chapters

Amos declares that Jehovah has authority over all nations.

II. Arraignment and Doom of Israel (III to VI).

This division consists of three discourses each introduced by the emphatic words, "Hear ye this word."

1. (III) The fact that Jehovah has chosen the nation is no guarantee of its safety. Every effect has its adequate cause. The causes now exist and destructive justice shall soon come upon Israel.

2. (IV) There is frivolity and formalism; former chastisements have proved ineffectual. Israel is therefore warned to prepare for judgment.

3. (V–VI) A lamentation for the doom of Israel which is now imminent. The "Day of Jehovah" will not be as the people in their infatuation think, an interposition in their favor. It will be "as if a man did flee from a lion and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him."

III. Five Visions of Judgment and an Historical Interlude (VII to IX):

These visions are arranged in the form of a climax.

1. (VII: 1–3) God sends locusts to devour the vegetation but they disappear at the prayer of the prophet.

2. (VII: 4–6) God sends fire to devour the great deep and the land, but this is quenched at the request of the prophet.

3. (VII: 7–9) The Lord by the plumbline shows that the time for mercy is past and declares that the sword shall now be drawn against the house of Jeroboam.

There is here a brief historical interlude (VII: 10–17). The plainness and effectiveness of the third vision aroused the opposition of Amaziah, the priest of the sanctuary at Bethel, and he commanded Amos to flee to the land of Judah.

4. (VIII) Through the symbolism of a basket of summer fruit, Jehovah pronounces a fresh and more detailed denunciation and judgment of doom.

5. (IX: 1–8) This fifth vision pictures the desolation falling upon the people as they are assembled for wor-

ship in their own temple, and the futility of any attempt to escape the decreed doom.

IV. The Messianic Kingdom (IX: 8–15).

The closing verses of the book give brighter hopes for the future. It is declared that Israel shall be dealt with as any other nation for its sins; but that only the sinners shall perish utterly. "I will raise up the ruins of the tabernacle of David, and will build it as in the days of old."

The prophecies of Amos were epoch-making. "He first *wrote* for posterity the outlines of an ethical theory of the world." "Amos is one of the most marvelous and incomprehensible figures in the history of the human mind, the pioneer of a process of evolution from which a new epoch of humanity dates. . . . Through Amos the God of Israel, as the God of justice and righteousness, becomes the God of the whole world, and the religion of this God, a universal religion."

Stories of the Two Prophets

ELIJAH THE PROPHET OF VENGEANCE

The setting of the story: Northern Israel; corrupting foreign alliances; baleful influence of Phœnicia; the increase of luxury; the worship of Baal.

The characters: Ahab, king of Israel; Jezebel, his wife, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; Elijah, the Tishbite from Gilead; Obadiah, the faithful chamberlain.

Thrilling and dramatic scenes in the life of Elijah:

1. The drought (I Kings, XVII): Elijah's unheralded appearance; the startling prophecy. Elijah seeks hiding at Cherith; is sent to Zarephath. The unfailing barrel of meal and cruse of oil. The widow's son.

2. The test of fire (XVIII): Elijah meets Obadiah, and reproves Ahab. Demands a chance to expose the priests of Baal. The test at Carmel. Baal's prophets slain. The small cloud and the great rain.

3. Flight before Jezebel (XIX): Jezebel's bloody threat. Elijah's precipitate flight. Under the juniper

tree. The scene at the cave on Mt. Horeb. The three commands. The choosing of Elisha.

4. Rebuking the tyrant (XXI): Naboth's vineyard. The coveting king. Naboth's firm refusal. Ahab pouts and Jezebel plots. Naboth sacrificed to whim of Ahab. The prophet's rebuke and the king's remorse. Fate of the messengers from the murderous Ahaziah.

5. A strenuous career ended (II Kings, II): Elijah seeks solitude. The bold persistence of Elisha. Covert sneers of the prophets. But Elisha bears the test. The chariot of fire. The mantle of Elijah.

ELISHA THE PROPHET OF COMMON LIFE

Each age needs a prophet to fit its conditions. The passion, the intensity, fierceness and volcanic energy of Elijah were needed in the strenuous days of Ahab and Jezebel. But after the fire and the earthquake should come the still, small voice; after fierce denunciation, words of winning sympathy. Elisha was not a prophet of the desert but one who lived among the people and inspired affection wherever he went. The world needs once in a while a man strong enough to excite terror, and then one through whom goodness and sweetness may work their charm. Elisha was a prophet whose deeds were gracious and soothing, who showed deep sympathy with the small wants and misfortunes of daily life.

The cycle of Elisha's deeds (I Kings, XIX: 19–21; II Kings, II–VIII: 15; XIII: 14–21):

1. The call to the prophetic office.
2. The mantle of Elijah.
3. The healing of the waters.
4. The mocking children.
5. The water trenches in Moab.
6. The widow's magic pot of oil saves her sons from bondage.
7. The hospitable Shunammite woman's son restored to life.
8. Death in the pot.
9. The miraculous feeding of the hundred men.
10. The healing of Naaman and the punishment of Gehazi.

11. The ax-head that swam.
12. Elisha reveals the secret councils of the Syrian king. The expedition to arrest him.
13. The siege of Samaria, Elisha's prophecy and its fulfillment.
14. The Shunammite woman's estate.
15. Hazael bears a message from Benhadad and is revealed to himself by Elisha.
16. Elisha's sickness, King Joash's visit, and the test of the king's determination. The death of Elisha. The man restored to life.

CULTURE VALUE OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER II

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE BIBLE

The purpose of the best education was well expressed by the Master Teacher when he explained the object of his coming into the world: "I came that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly." This means, of course, the complete life, the life of action and of the spirit. This great book furnishes materials for the preparation of men and women for complete living. It has great educational value because:

1. It emphasizes the value of human life.
2. It deals with practical problems of life.
3. It is rich in the materials that nourish the life of the spirit.
4. It provides for the cultivation of man's æsthetic nature.
5. It presents the highest ideals of life, individual and national.

1. It is sad to read of the low value set on human life in ancient pagan times. During the reign of a single Roman emperor, for example, ten thousand men were slain in the Coliseum to amuse the populace. Life was so miserable that suicide became popular. Read the list of the great men who killed themselves. If the general lost a battle, he fell on his own sword. The citizen carried a dagger with which he might make his quietus if the market went against him. Slaves were beaten, maimed, put to death at the pleasure of the master. But when the Bible came and taught that even a slave bore two worlds in his heart, life was reckoned more valuable. It was Christianity, the flower and fruit of this old Book, that set this proper value on the life of man. Under

its influence this valuation took the sweep of the eternities.

2. This book deals also with the practical problems of the world. There are people who think that because it deals with religion it must of necessity have nothing to do with the common affairs of life. But it does in fact deal with all sorts of every-day activities. It is really a guide in all human interests, both sacred and secular: it is a book for this world as well as for the world to come. It teaches that religion is practical; that conduct is its basis. Many of the religions of the world divorce religion and conduct. What a man believes in a religious way has little to do with how he behaves himself. But the great central truth of the Old Testament is righteousness, right conduct, and this is peculiarly the master truth of the New Testament. Here it goes even farther and insists that we shall attend to the motives and feelings whence conduct proceeds.

In accordance with the best precepts and practices of education, this book gives concrete examples, rich, numerous, and varied, to show what is meant by practical righteousness. It is not true that these examples are so ancient as to be obsolete. We get wrong notions of the lives of men who lived in ancient Bible times, if we think that they felt they were men apart, peculiar men; if we look upon Moses, Abraham, and Elijah, as if they knew they were living in an age that would be strange and peculiar to us of the twentieth century. An old professor of history once said to his students, "Young gentlemen, you must remember that the ancients did not know they were the ancients." So this great handbook of life sets forth the deeds and aspirations of a multitude of wonderful men and women who looked upon life in just as practical a way as we do to-day, men and women whose names are on the great bead-rolls of fame, and whose days are crowded and crowned with practical activities.

3. It is rich in materials that nourish the life of the spirit. It is a truth of vast importance that the struggles, the defeats and victories, the despair and exaltation,

the worship, the love, the devoted service of the men of many generations, have given to mankind a wealth of spiritual force, and have fashioned out of it a world of idea and emotion into which we are born just as truly as we are born into the natural physical world. One great object of education should be to bring the child into contact with this spiritual force, to bring him into his race inheritance of idea, emotion, hope, and aspiration; not to have him put on the past as a garment, but by this contact to have old ideas, emotions, and aspirations reborn in his mind and soul. Thus learning is living. It is coming in contact with the larger life of humanity. There ought to be in the school courses material that has in it the ennobling record of the world's spiritual achievements, material which is warm with the thought and life and feeling of humanity. It is only by contact of spirit with spirit that there can be growth and development. And when we are selecting material for the development of character in girls and boys, let us choose that which is saturated with spiritual energy, energy from the choicest, the strongest, the richest souls of all ages.

The great secular books of the world are depositories of this spiritual energy; they offer material that makes for strength and nobility; so that we may say of the great authors of these books: they are

> "The immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence."

But the richest depository of this spiritual force is the Bible, a book which enables the student to walk and talk with those choice spirits of the human race that were permitted to climb to the very mountain-tops of truth where God's sunlight is not obstructed or dimmed by the mists and shadows of the earth-valleys, to come in contact with the great men, the poets, the priests, the philosophers, the prophets, the law-givers, who have enjoyed the open vision.

4. This great text-book recognizes the fact that beauty and joy have their place in life and so provides for the cultivation of man's æsthetic nature. Man is made ca-

pable of enjoyment. Although his experiences in the world teach him that life is a very serious matter, he learns, also, that joy and gladness are his by right. Why should he be placed in such a beautiful world if it is not intended that his mind and heart shall respond to this beauty? And just as God has made a beautiful world for us to live in, he has made a beautiful book to tell us his truth; it comes to us clothed in the most beautiful forms of the world's literature. It tells us not only of the truths of religion, but of the beauty and joy of the world. It is full of marvelous incidents and engaging history, with sunny pictures of old-world scenery, and charming and pathetic anecdotes of patriarchal times. It is a book of lofty thoughts, clothed in glowing rhetoric and striking imagery. All the realms of nature, the majestic, the sublime, the peaceful, and the beautiful are drawn upon to express its great truths in images of vividness, power, and beauty. As one reads its pages he can not resist the appeal of these images of sublimity, majesty, mystery, joy, and gentleness. What more majestic appeal to the imagination, both in thought and phrase, than is found in the opening paragraph of Genesis!

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light; and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Or how could one be better carried on the wings of the imagination than to follow the flight of the poet in the 135th Psalm!

Whither shall I go from thy spirit
Or Whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there.
If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there shall thy hand lead me
And thy right hand uphold me.

Or what is more satisfying to one who would meditate upon the matchless power of the Ruler of the world than the lines of the 107th Psalm?

They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters;
These see the works of the Lord,
And his wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths;
Their soul melteth away because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wits' end.
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they are quiet;
So he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.

What can better "tease us out of thought" than to read the sublime words of the Voice out of the Whirlwind as it overwhelms Job with puzzling queries concerning the unsolved mysteries of the universe?

Have the gates of death been revealed unto thee?
Or hast thou seen the gates of the shadow of death?
Where is the way to the dwelling of light?
And as for darkness, where is the place thereof? . . .
By what way is the light parted,
Or the east wind scattered upon the earth? . . .
Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades
Or loose the bands of Orion? . . .
Canst thou send forth lightnings that they may go,
And say unto thee, Here we are?

How beautiful are the words of Moses in the blessing pronounced upon Joseph!

Blessed of the Lord be his land;
For the precious things of heaven, for the dew,
And for the deep that coucheth beneath,
And for the precious things of the fruits of the sun,
And for the precious things of the growth of the moons,
And for the chief things of the ancient mountains,
And for the precious things of the everlasting hills,
And for the precious things of the earth and the fullness thereof.

How vivid, striking, and beautiful are the pictures of nature used to set forth the attributes of the great Jehovah, gentle and magnificent!

The hills are girded with joy. . . .
Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place
In all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. . . .
The strength of the hills is his also . . .
The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord . . .
Let the floods clap their hands;
Let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord . . .
I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help. . . .
Who hath weighed the mountains in scales,
And the hills in a balance? . . .
The mountains and the hills shall burst forth before you into singing;
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. . . .
He stood and measured the earth;
He beheld, and drove asunder the nations:
And the eternal mountains were scattered,
The everlasting hills did bow. . . .
As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
So Jehovah is round about his people,
From this time forth and forever more. . . .
God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be moved in the heart of the seas;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. . . .
Thy righteousness is like the great mountains. . . .
The mountains shall bring peace to the people.

5. It presents the highest ideals of life, national and individual. The things that we pride ourselves on to-day are our schools, the humaneness of our laws, freedom of speech, our active charity organizations, and the protection of the poor against the encroachments of the rich. But these things are not new in the world. This old book tells of a compulsory school law: it required compulsory education after a fashion—every father was expected to educate his own children. There was freedom of speech, too, in those ancient days. The prophets and religious teachers were specially protected from penalties

for free speech. They suffered in two cases only: when they preached treason, and when they were guilty of fraud.

The laws of that ancient nation were humane. Robert G. Ingersoll declared that the statutes of Moses were inhumanly cruel, because, as he said, hundreds of crimes were punishable by death. Now, the fact is that only about a dozen crimes were punishable by death according to the Mosaic code, and its spirit is humane indeed compared with the laws of England in the time of Henry VIII, when more than two hundred offenses were punishable by death.

We boast that these are the days of great charitable enterprises and benevolent institutions. Such societies are multiplied indeed and many distressed people receive assistance in the time of their need. But giving which is impersonal lacks the most essential elements of benevolence; it fails to call forth gratitude and encourages improvidence. These old Hebrews did not need any such machinery to deal with their problems of benevolence; they dealt in practical home charity. This was their rule:

> If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of the gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not shut thy hand from thy poor brother. But thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need in which he wanteth.

Indeed this book presents a wonderfully perfect ideal government, a commonwealth founded upon a sort of general suffrage, recognizing popular rights, providing for the protection of these rights, guarding the subjects from despotic actions of their king, requiring public education, insisting upon freedom of speech, providing for charity, and enacting merciful laws. When we consider the character and spirit of the government as set forth in this old book we long for the time when these ideals shall gain general acceptance and when all the people shall say:

> Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from

Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

The Hebrew conception of God may challenge comparison with that of any other nation whatsoever. To the Hebrews Jehovah was great enough to know all things and compassionate enough to stoop to the sorrows of the humble poor:

He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
He healeth the broken in heart,
He bindeth up their wounds.
He counteth the number of the stars;
He giveth them all their names.

He is all-powerful, too:

Great is our Lord and mighty in power.
There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.
Thou hast made the heaven and the earth and by thy great power and by thy stretched-out arm: there is nothing too hard for thee.

He is everywhere present and infinite in understanding:

Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.
His understanding is infinite.

He has also the gentler, the more compassionate attributes: He is just and holy, merciful and full of loving kindness:

Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.
The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. . . .
Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? . . .
Thy loving kindness is better than life. . . .
Oh, how great is thy goodness.

His pity and care have the tenderness of a mother and the protecting power of omnipotence:

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.
God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. . . .
Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.
When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

The biblical conception of God being understood, it is easier to understand the Hebrew ideal of manhood. The ideals for the individual are lofty and noble. First, he is made in the image of God and made the master of the world. No mythologies give man such a noble origin and destiny. There are presented, also, examples of magnificent, heroic courage. What a line of heroes might be named!

What shall I say more, for time would fail me to tell of men who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fires, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

What other book presents such an ennobling, inspiring ideal of the future life, the hope of divine-like immortality? The Greek conception of the life to come was of a world of darkness and gloom, with nothing to do, everything to suffer. What a comforting contrast is the ideal of the future life as presented in this great book:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying nor pain any more. . . . And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.

CHAPTER III

LITERARY VALUE OF THE BIBLE

No one can claim to be well educated who is not fairly familiar with the history and literature found in the Bible. The English Bible has so shaped the ideas and ideals of the English-speaking people, has been so woven into all their literature that it has become the one supreme book in the English tongue. There is operative in the world a law which may be called the conservation of spiritual energy. The best vehicles for the transmission of this energy are the great books of the world. They transmit to the people of each succeeding generation this spiritual energy as a most important part of their race inheritance. The book with the greatest carrying power and the richest gifts is the Bible. Its original measure of inspired power has been enlarged by the absorption into its pages of the faith and trust of multitudes of devoted readers through the ages; and as it has passed down the centuries it has poured into the world, in days of darkness and doubt, a flood of the cleansing sunshine of righteousness. The life and culture of our time, or of any time, can not be complete without the transforming touch of this spiritual energy. For this reason and many others, it is abundantly worth while to study the Bible with thoroughness and seriousness. In this chapter seven reasons are given why it should be studied by literary methods and for its literary value.

1. The charge that it is sacrilegious to study the Bible as literature can not be sustained; such study may be wise and reverent.

2. A close and critical study will make its message clearer.

3. Such study will be profitable because the Bible is a great storehouse of good English which has been more

powerful in shaping our language, both spoken and written, than any other influence whatsoever.

4. The specific study of its language, characters, and stories is profitable because in our everyday speech, and secular literature there are multitudes of verbal forms and illustrations drawn from the Bible, whose full meaning and force are understood only by those who are familiar with the original sources.

5. It furnishes interesting reading and has a rich and satisfying variety.

6. It is profitable to study the Bible because in it are found the best examples of great literature, in diction, form, and feeling.

7. Its study is worth while because it is a literature of power. It has shaped the thought and morals of the best nations of the world.

1. George Eliot makes Adam Bede say: "I prefer to read the Apocrypha rather than the Bible for in reading the Apocrypha I can use my own reason." But it is not really sacrilegious to apply to the Bible the same standards of excellence and the same canons of good taste that are applied as a matter of course to any other book. A man who affected to despise learning one time said, "I love flowers but I hate botany." Suppose a botanist, a rare reader of God in nature, goes forth into the fields in search of flowers. He finds a beautiful flower and at once proceeds to pick it to pieces. "Alas, you irreverent man!" you cry, "you are destroying one of God's beautiful works. What right have you to tear apart those petals that make a thing of such exquisite loveliness?" But the botanist is not animated by a spirit of ruthless destruction; he is filled with a spirit of loving appreciation. He knows that the only way to understand the flower completely is to pick it to pieces; that only in this way can he comprehend the wonderful organism, the splendid beauty, the real significance of the flower. And just as botany conduces to a greater love for flowers, so should a close, careful, critical study of the Bible lead us to a greater and more reverent love for the truth that it teaches. Of course it should be remembered that while we study its literary forms very

much as we study other books, we should not for a moment forget that the truly wonderful thing about this sacred literature is the divine spirit which animates it, the everlasting purpose which lies back of it all. But while this is true, we should not fall into the error of believing that it is sacrilegious to study it in a careful, critical way. It has for us "apples of gold in baskets of silver," and it is not sacrilegious to examine the baskets of silver.

2. A study of the Bible as literature will aid in understanding its message. Language does not give forth its message with unvarying exactness. It is never easy to know just how much meaning or how little a writer intends to convey by a word or a phrase. One must have abundant knowledge of the way in which men have thought and spoken, a large experience in interpreting the thoughts and feelings of men from their words, to be at all sure that he is getting what an author intended he should get. In secular literature no one is bold enough to set himself up as an interpreter of masterpieces unless he brings to the interpretation a mind trained to understand and appreciate the force of words and literary forms, and a method of study and interpretation which has stood the test of years of application.

Of course there are things about this great Book that are so simple that even a child can understand and appreciate them; but there are things profound enough to puzzle the philosopher, and these the reader can not hope to understand unless he has prepared himself for the task of weighing and considering. The man of little experience in interpreting men's thoughts and feelings from their written words must fail to get at the heart of many a passage. He should be able to read between the lines, to discern where he ought to rest his full weight and press out the fullest meaning, and where he ought to press lightly. The man of no range in his reading, with no experience in interpretation, must be inclined inevitably to treat all parts alike, to make one word just as emphatic, just as literal as another.

The truths of the Bible are offered to us in the same words, phrases, and literary forms, that are used in all

other literature; it ought to require no argument to prove that if the student is to get all that is bound up in these words, phrases, and forms, he should make diligent use of all his secular knowledge, of all his culture, of all his best methods of getting at the meaning and force of language, and of all his trained powers of interpreting literature.

3. The literary study of the Bible will be profitable because it is a great storehouse of good English which has been more powerful in shaping our language, both spoken and written, than any other influence whatsoever.

Dr. Cook of Yale says:

"From Cædmon's time to the present the influence of Bible diction upon English speech has been virtually uninterrupted. The Bible has been an active force in English literature for over 1200 years, and during the whole period it has been molding the diction of representative thinkers and literary artists."

Mr. Saintsbury in his history of English literature says:

"But great as are Bacon and Raleigh, they can not approach, as writers of prose, the company of scholarly divines who produced what is probably the greatest prose work in any language—the Authorized Version of the Bible in English."

It has often been said that "The Pilgrim's Progress" of Bunyan stands unrivaled as a model of plain, vigorous clear, pleasing English. The reason for this excellence is evident. Bunyan was fairly saturated not only with the spirit but with the language of the English Bible. Coleridge declared that intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being vulgar in point of style. And John Ruskin, who was doubtless the greatest master of pure, idiomatic, vigorous, and eloquent English prose that the last century produced, says that his mother required him in childhood to commit to memory and repeat to her over and over again, many passages of the Bible. We need not seek further for the secret of his admirable diction and perfect command of English phraseology.

4. "It is woven into the literature of the scholar and colors the talk of the street." A familiar acquaintance with the words, phrases, stories, and characters of the Bible is valuable because our everyday speech and our secular literature have been enriched by the use of and by allusions to them. There are in our secular literature multitudes of allusions to the Bible. Again and again does a writer take advantage of the associations which cluster about a Bible phrase or incident and by a simple touch bring up in the mind of the understanding reader all the circumstances and sentiments connected with the original. Indeed no one who lays claim to any degree of culture can be ignorant of these incidents, phrases, and characters. They have been assimilated into the common speech. The most illiterate man understands, after a fashion, the phrases: "the widow's mite," "a Judas kiss," "the flesh-pots of Egypt," "a still small voice," "a Jehu," "a perfect babel," "a Nimrod," "bread upon the waters," "a Daniel come to judgment," "a Solomon," "a Delilah," "a mother in Israel," "a land flowing with milk and honey," "the valley of decision," and "the salt of the earth." These have become the permanent possession of our every-day speech and convey a meaning not associated directly with their origin; but to those who are familiar with the origin and setting of these terms, they have a vigor and significance which others can not at all appreciate.

All our poets have enriched their pages with thoughts and images from this wonderful literary storehouse. If one wishes to know how frequently Tennyson drew out of this inexhaustible mine treasures both new and old, let him examine the appendix to Dr. Henry Van Dyke's study of Tennyson; he will find listed there more than two hundred references. Among these are the phrases: "as manna in my wilderness"; "Pharaoh's darkness"; "Ruth amid the fields of corn"; "stiff as Lot's wife"; "I have flung thee pearls and find thee swine"; "and marked me even as Cain"; "the church on Peter's rock"; "a whole Peter's sheet"; "one was the Tishbite whom the ravens fed"; "who can call him friend that dips in the same dish."

From Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes are selected the following allusions, a few from many that might be quoted: "We too who laugh at Israel's golden calf"; "a cloud by day, by night a pillared flame"; "He who prayed the prayer of all mankind"; "Why did the choir of angels sing for joy"? "I thought of Judas and his bribe"; "They who gathered manna every morn";

"Mountains are cleft before you
As the sea before the tribes of Israel's wandering sons."

"When Moab's daughter homeless and forlorn,
Found Boaz slumbering by his heaps of corn."

The space of many chapters would be required to set forth Shakespeare's indebtedness to the Bible. The following are some of the most familiar allusions:

"Good name in man or woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their soul."

"Samson, master, was a man of good carriage, great carriage; for he carried the town gates on his back like a porter."

"You found his mote; the king your mote did see;
But I a beam do find in each of thee."

"I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir. I have not much skill in grass."

"It is hard to come as for a camel
To thread the postern of a needle's eye."

By the use of these allusions the poet may not only give completeness to his thought, force to his truth, and vividness to his imagery, but he may enrich his verse with a beauty and significance beyond his own power. He may write, "A little lower than angels"—and at once we hear added to the music of his lines,

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him a little lower than angels,
And crowned him with glory and honor."

Or the poet writes the phrase, "Solomon-shaming flowers," and we at once hear the matchless lines:

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow;
They toil not, neither do they spin:
Yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory
Was not arrayed like one of these."

5. There are many people who do not look upon the Bible as a readable book; yet its pages are full of unusual charm. It is a book full of marvelous incidents and engaging history, with sunny pictures of old world scenery, and charming and pathetic anecdotes of patriarchal times. Any one who wishes literature having unity, variety, beauty, strength, and interest, can find it in this volume of sixty-six books. He will there find law, folk-lore, tradition, official records, historical narrative, epic poetry, dramatic poetry, lyric poetry, proverbial philosophy, patriotic addresses, religious addresses, parables, prayers, prophecies, biographies, theology, circular letters, private letters, riddles, fables, dream literature, love songs, patriotic songs, and songs of praise. These writings were produced by probably thirty-one writers through a period of fifteen hundred years. Some of them lived in palaces and some in prisons; some were princes and some were peasants; some were scholars and some were illiterate men; some were philosophers and some herdsmen, fishermen, and mechanics. So it is a book appealing to the learned and the ignorant, to the prince and the peasant, the sage and the child, to all races, all nations, all classes, and it approaches all these in the way they can best be reached.

The place of the origin of the Bible should give it variety. It originated in a land which is a sort of epitome of the world. The configuration of Palestine, its immense variety of scenery, its vast range of climate, its extraordinary range of animal and vegetable life, reproduce, in a way, the features of the whole world. So the book is cosmopolitan in its atmosphere and imagery. It is full of the imagery of the sea and has in it also the quiet serenity of the secluded valley and lonely shore. It is filled with pastoral imagery. It tells of a God who is a Shepherd, of a king who came from the sheepfold. It is warm with the breath and brilliant with the light of the eastern clime: It tells of gardens and

spices, of roses and lilies, of gold and jewels, of pomegranates and palms: its imagery is oriental in its richness. On the other hand it is also a book of mountains and snow and ice; its atmosphere is affected by the winds from Lebanon and snow-capped Hermon, as well as by breezes from the City of Palm Trees.

6. The forms of literature found in the Bible are numerous and varied. Do you want biographies? Here you may find biographies which in directness of narrative, vigor of movement, interest, and in faithfulness to life are superior to any that were ever written—certainly more faithful in telling the truth and the whole truth. Or do you want to study love stories? Here you can find stories of such genuineness, naturalness, noble simplicity, and straightforward truthfulness that they put to shame the multitude of sickly, silly sentimental novels of to-day. Or do you want to read annals of war? Here your blood may be stirred with accounts of battles, sieges, deadly encounters, ignoble treachery, noble patriotism, galling defeats, glorious victories, and remarkable bravery, records not surpassed in the history of any nation. Or do you want to study law literature? Here you can find a system of jurisprudence to which the best countries of the civilized world must acknowledge themselves indebted; and these laws set forth in statutes so simple, so plain, and withal so unmistakable in their meaning that you will begin to feel pity for our own lawmakers who use vain repetitions as the heathen do, and write their statutes in language like Samson's riddles.

Or do you want to study fiction? Here you will find the wonderfully effective parables, the instructive fables, and the warning dreams, all with a moral lesson so forcibly put that you need hardly ask why there should be fiction in the Bible, or why the imagination may not be inspired as well as the reason and the judgment. Or do you want to read poetry? Here you may find poems of transcendent genius, some of the noblest poems of the world, poems breathing such lofty piety, such fervent devotion, such noble sentiments, and all expressed in imagery so beautiful and sublime that you

can not choose but be entranced by their beauty and their power.

It is profitable to study the Bible because it contains the best forms of literature in satisfying perfection. The English historian James Anthony Froude wrote:

"The Bible thoroughly known is a literature of itself —the rarest and the richest in all departments of thought or imagination which exists."

Dr. Robert South, the great English divine, says:

"In God's word we have not only a body of religion, but also a system of the best rhetoric; and as the highest things require the highest expressions, so we shall find nothing in Scripture so sublime in itself, but it is reached and sometimes overtopped by the sublimity of the expression. So that he who said he would not read the Scripture for fear of spoiling his style showed himself as much a blockhead as an atheist, and to have as small a gust of the elegancies of expression as the sacredness of the matter."

Sir William Jones testifies:

"I have carefully and regularly perused these holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that the volume independent of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books in whatever language they may have been written."

Do you ask for tenderness and devotion expressed in faultless rhetoric?

And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

Do you ask for pathos and elegant simplicity?

And Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king; for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

And the King was much moved, and went up to the chamber

over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Do you want eloquence of appeal, gentleness of warning, depth of yearning, and glorious promise united with beauty of poetic form, pleasing imagery, and most picturesque metaphor? Hear Isaiah:

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. . . . For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree; and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Do you want the most practical wisdom set forth in sentences of the utmost vigor, terseness, and rhythmic beauty?

My son, forget not my law; but let thy heart keep my commandments;
For length of days and long life and peace shall they add unto thee;
Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart;
So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. . . .
Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding;
For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.
She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.
Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left riches and honor.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her.

7. The study of the literature of the Bible is worth while because it is a literature of power; it has shaped the thought and morals of the Christian world.

De Quincey divided literature into two classes, the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. The Bible belongs peculiarly to the literature of power. We know that it is the most powerful book that ever spoke to man. The literature of power is always the great literature; it is the only literature that has an unending lease of life. The literature of knowledge will live only until some one else embodies the old facts in a partially new form. Literature of power can never become obsolete because it deals with things eternally true; and the deeper and truer the message of a book, the more inevitable will be the form in which this message will state itself. The literature of the Bible is so surcharged with power that virtue goes out of it whenever it touches the people. This virtue influences their thoughts, forms their governments, frames their laws, shapes their morals, molds their characters, and fashions their lives. All modern thought, ethics, culture, art, law, literature, conduct, and the dull, common round of life, find here most of the materials out of which they are shaped, and by which they are inspired. Thought finds here its problems; ethics, its standards; culture, its rich materials; art, its most inspiring subjects; law, its fundamental ideas; literature, its spirit and ideals; conduct, its primary sanctions; and the multitude of common relations and activities of life find here those elements of mystery, hope, and exaltation which make them at all endurable.

Matthew Arnold, poet and critic, and profound student of the Bible, says:

"As well imagine a man with a sense for poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer and Shakespeare, as a man with a sense for conduct not cultivating it by the help of the Bible."

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, poet, philosopher, and theologian, says:

"For more than a thousand years the Bible collectively taken has gone hand in hand with civilization, science, law,—in short, with the moral and intellectual cultivation of the species, always supporting and often leading the way."

Indeed almost an unlimited number of illustrations and opinions might be offered in evidence, but let a particular and concrete testimonial conclude the list. It is an account of the influence of the Bible on a particular nation at a particular time. In his "History of the English People," John Richard Green says of the time when the English Bible so powerfully stirred the life and conscience of England:

"So far as the nation at large was concerned, no history, no romance, hardly any poetry save the little-known verse of Chaucer, existed in the English tongue when the Bible was ordered to be set up in the churches. Sunday after Sunday, day after day, the crowds that gathered around the Bible in the nave of St. Paul's, or the family group that hung on its words in the devotional exercises at home, were leavened with a new literature. Legend and annal, war song and psalm, state roll and biography, the mighty voice of the prophets, the parables of evangelists, stories of mission journeys, or perils by the sea and among the heathen, philosophic arguments, apocalyptic visions, all were flung broadcast over minds unoccupied for the most part by any rival learning. But far greater than its effect on literature or social phrase was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large. The Bible was as yet the one book which was familiar to every Englishman; and everywhere its words as they fell on ears that custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm. The effect of the Bible however dispassionately we examine it, was simply amazing. The whole people became a church. The problem of life, and death, whose questionings found no answers in the higher minds of Shakespeare's day pressed for an answer not only from noble and scholar, but from farmer and shopkeeper in the age that followed him."

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

CHAPTER IV

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible has a natural as well as a supernatural history. It was written as thousands of other books have been written, and preserved and transmitted as thousands of other books have been preserved and transmitted. The books of the Old Testament were of slow growth and gave expression to the developing religious consciousness of the Hebrew race. The writing of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments extended through a period of about 1500 years. Among the people of the Hebrew race there appeared again and again men of lofty vision, men of inspiration, through whom messages of spiritual truth were given to their fellows and to the world. These messages were embodied in the books of the Bible, and the books grew as the messages grew. In writing these books the authors made use of materials long since lost to the world. So the Bible as we have it to-day represents the remains of a very wide literature. There are in the historical books of the Old Testament quotations from and references to almost a score of other books which are now lost. The titles of some of these books are, The Acts of Solomon, The Chronicles of King David, The Book of Nathan the Prophet, The Book of Gad the Seer, The Book of Jasher, and The Book of the Wars of the Lord.

Materials and Composition. But present day biblical scholars declare that the first six historical books of the Old Testament are indebted to older books in a way quite different from the indebtedness just mentioned. They assert that these historical books as we have them to-day are composite, their texture having been formed by the skillful interweaving of a number of older histories. They further assert that they are able to take

any one of the six books mentioned and resolve it into its original component parts and assign the parts to their proper original history. These more ancient books in their chronological order are: The Early Judean Prophetic History, The Northern Prophetic History, The Combined Prophetic Histories, The Priestly History, and The Combined Priestly and Prophetic Histories. This last combination constitutes the books of the Hexateuch as they are to-day.

The Early Judean History opens with the primitive story of the creation found in Genesis II, gives an account of man's fall as found in Genesis III, and proceeds with a brief account of the different human institutions as they were successively developed. It is said that when the extracts from this ancient history, found in the Hexateuch, are put together, they make a brief connected record of all the important events in Israel's many-sided life down to the reign of Solomon. The literary style of this reconstructed record is simple, concise, vivid, picturesque, and dramatic.

The Northern Prophetic History is a similar connected story composed of the national songs and traditions current in Northern Israel. This history when reconstructed from the present Hexateuch begins with the life of Abraham and gives a record of Israel's life down to the time of Saul. It is closely parallel to the Judean account, but each has preserved narratives peculiar to itself and has many distinguishing characteristics. The mount of revelation in the Northern History is Horeb instead of Sinai; the people of Palestine are Amorites instead of Canaanites; God is called Elohim, not Jehovah; and he communicates with man by messengers instead of by word of mouth.

When Northern Israel was carried into captivity in 721 B. C., its literature came into the possession of the southern prophets who combined the northern history with their own, making a composite narrative. This showed some minor inconsistencies but included what was valuable in both. Thus was formed The Combined Prophetic Histories.

The Priestly History was written by Judean exiles in

Babylon. These prophets under the influence of their new surroundings in the city of their exile were transformed into priests with new ideas about religion and a strong love for law and ritual. Certain of these priests wrote a brief history of their race from this new point of view. This history begins with the story of the creation as found in the first chapter of Genesis and presents the chief incidents in Israel's history up to the time of the conquest of Canaan. The style is formal and legal and the interest is chiefly in the origin of Israel's legal and ceremonial institutions. In this narrative the nation's history is so far idealized that Moses, Jacob, and other national heroes have no sins or weaknesses charged against them.

Finally, the composite prophetic history and the priestly history were combined. This fusion produced the first six books of the Old Testament in their present form; and since the writer of the Hexateuch was a priest the priestly narrative was given precedence in the fusion. For example, the order of events in the priestly history is adopted in the composite story, and the important introduction to Genesis is from the priestly narrative. It is indeed such a majestic account of creation that it makes a most fitting introduction to the whole of the Old Testament.

The other books of the Old Testament have a simpler history than those of the Hexateuch. The Books of Samuel were originally a single work, and existed substantially in their present form about 700 B. C. The Books of Kings were also originally a single book, dating from 600 B. C. The Book of Judges was formed during the period of the Exile out of the material of earlier narratives. Ruth was written about 450 B. C. Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther were written about 250 B. C.

The collection of the proverbs which make up the Book of Proverbs was continued through the years from 900 to 250 B. C. The poems of the Psalter were composed through a period extending from 900 B. C. to the completion of the collection, about 150 B. C. The conjectured dates of the other books of poetry are, Lamen-

tations, 540; Job, 350; Canticles, 300; and Ecclesiastes, 250 B. C.

The Books of the Prophets were composed through a period of 600 years. The Book of Amos, the oldest one, is assigned to 750, and the Book of Daniel to 160 B. C. The other prophetic books were written in the intervening years in the following order: Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Obadiah, Ezekiel, II Isaiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, and Jonah.

Old Manuscript Copies. The oldest copies of the Bible are not in printed but in manuscript form. This is necessarily the case because printing was not invented until the fifteenth century. There are more than three thousand manuscripts of the Bible in existence, variously dated from 325 A. D., to the thirteenth century. They are distributed chiefly among the great libraries throughout the civilized world. Not one of them is absolutely complete, but there are about thirty which contain all the books of the Old and New Testaments, lacking only a few leaves of being complete. The greater part of this large number contain only small portions of the Scriptures.

Three of these manuscripts are very important and interesting, because they are so very ancient. All of them originally contained the entire Greek Bible of the Old and New Testaments in the Septuagint version. They are called, the Vatican manuscript, the Alexandrian manuscript, and the Sinaitic manuscript. The Vatican manuscript was long the most important one known. It has been in the Vatican library for about five hundred years. It formerly belonged to a Greek priest, Bessarion, and is the oldest of all the manuscripts. Many scholars assign it to the year 325 A. D. It has been kept with most jealous care and a complete copy of it was not given to the world until the year 1866. In that year Dr. Tischendorf, a German scholar, was allowed, after many attempts and repulses, to study this jealously guarded book; and in 1867 he published a copy of it in the common Greek type. Thus this buried treasure became the property of the world.

The Alexandrian manuscript was found in Egypt and is now kept in the British Museum. It was presented to Charles I in 1628 by the Patriarch of Constantinople, who brought it from Alexandria in Egypt. The Vatican Bible consists of one huge volume, but this one consists of four volumes, three of the Old Testament and one of the New Testament. The Patriarch of Constantinople testified that the report concerning it was that it had been copied by Thecla, a Christian lady of the nobility, in the fourth century A. D. Nearly all the critics agree that this manuscript is as old as the fifth century.

The most interesting of the three manuscripts is the Sinaitic. The story of how it was found is a veritable romance. It was discovered in 1859 by Dr. Tischendorf, the German scholar before mentioned, in the convent of St. Catherine at the foot of Mount Sinai. In 1844 Dr. Tischendorf was traveling in the East in search of ancient documents and when he was in the library of this convent, his eye fell upon a large basketful of old parchments, apparently of no value, and waiting only to be used as fire-kindling. When he looked them over, he learned, to his great surprise and delight, that they were sheets of a most ancient copy of the Septuagint. He was allowed to take forty sheets, but when he unwarily expressed his delight, he was denied any more. As he grew persistent the monks grew stubborn in their refusal. It became known in Europe that Dr. Tischendorf had made an important discovery, and the English government sent out experts to search the East for lost documents. But the searchers came back empty-handed. In 1853 Dr. Tischendorf visited the old convent again but no traces of the desired manuscript could be found. He did not despair, but in 1859 once more visited the convent in the desert. His errand seemed in vain and he was about to take his leave. However, the evening before his departure he was invited into the cell of the steward of the monastery to partake of refreshments. When they were alone the monk said, "I, too, sometimes read a copy of the book which you seek"; and as he spoke he placed in the hands of the anxious

searcher a bulky volume wrapped in red cloth. Immediately the great scholar knew that his search had been rewarded, for therein he found the fragments which he had seen in the basket fifteen years before, with other parts of the Old Testament and the whole of the New Testament. He was careful to restrain his joy this time, and was permitted to take the volume to his own room, where he declares he literally danced for joy, and worked so diligently at copying parts of it that he felt it would be wickedness to sleep. After much negotiation the manuscript was deposited in the library of St. Petersburg and in due time Dr. Tischendorf, with the aid of assistants, made an edition of it in facsimile, and in 1863, through the munificence of the Emperor of Russia, copies of it were sent to the great libraries throughout Christendom.

The Canon. The word *canon* is a Greek word meaning literally a measuring rod; it means in this connection an authoritative list or catalogue of the books which the churches receive as given by inspiration and as constituting for them the divine rule of faith and practice, in distinction from *apocryphal* religious books of uncertain authority. It is an interesting study to follow out the history of the collection of the books of the Bible into the canon as we have it to-day. It is believed by the Jews that the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, which they arranged as twenty-two, were collected and arranged by Ezra, Nehemiah, and their companions after the rebuilding of the Temple, on their return from captivity. The Talmud says that the Hebrew canon was formed gradually by Ezra and Nehemiah, and the Great Synagogue, a council composed of 120 members, priests, Levites, doctors of the law, and other eminent representatives of the people. It is said that Nehemiah was its first president and that it met at different times in the city of Jerusalem through a period of over one hundred years.

Ancient Versions. The Bible has been translated into more than 450 languages and dialects, but there are a few ancient versions which are of peculiar value because the student must look to them for the authentic

text with which he compares his modern version in whatever language it may be. The two principal ancient versions are the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate. The Greek version, called the Septuagint, is worthy of special notice for several reasons. In it are the oldest existing copies of the Scriptures or any part of them in any language; the Old Testament in this version exerted the largest influence on the language and style of the New Testament. It was extensively used in the time of Christ, not only in Egypt where it originated, and in the Roman provinces generally, but also in Palestine; it is notable, too, because the quotations from the Old Testament found in the New Testament are more commonly from this version than from the Hebrew version; that is, Jesus and his disciples must have made use of this version.

The Jewish account of the origin of the Septuagint is that Ptolemy Philadelphus who reigned in Egypt 285–247 B. C., requested Eleazer, the high priest of Jerusalem, to send him seventy-two chosen men with a copy of the Jewish law that it might be translated into the Greek language and laid up in the royal library at Alexandria. Eleazer accordingly selected six elders from each of the twelve tribes to do this work. They went to Alexandria, taking with them a copy of the law written, it is said, on parchment in letters of gold. These chosen men were received by the king with high honors, and lodged in a palace on an island supposed to have been the island of Pharos in the harbor of Alexandria, where they completed their work in seventy-two days and were sent home with munificent gifts. There is a legend that they were shut up in separate cells where they had no communication with each other, and that the results of their work when compared were found to be identical, and were hence accepted as inspired. However, the marked inequality of different parts of the work sufficiently disproves this legend and seems to support the belief that the version was the product of different times as well as of different hands.

The great Latin version known as the Vulgate is of

unusual importance to us because it has vitally influenced the English Bible. The early English versions were translations from the Vulgate and much of the strength and beauty of its Latin passed into the literary style of the translators. The word *Vulgate* means *common* or *current.* Toward the close of the fourth century A. D., the various Latin texts of the Bible had become so much corrupted that revision was imperative. The great scholar known as St. Jerome was selected by Pope Damasus to perform this important task. He revised the New Testament about the year 385, and completed the Old Testament in the year 405. St. Jerome's translation was not at first accepted by the Church; but it gradually made its way into favor and about two hundred years after his death, became the universally received version of the Church. In 1546 it was declared to be the authorized version of the Roman church and has remained so to the present day.

English Versions. The Bible was not translated into the English tongue all at once. It grew slowly following closely the course alike of religious and intellectual life in England. Its story begins with Cædmon of Whitby on the northeastern coast of England, in the year 670. Here the English Bible and English poetry both took their rise. Cædmon in his rude rime sang the song of Genesis and Exodus, and the story of the Gospel. The next translating was done by the Venerable Bede, the father of English learning. At the Monastery of Jarrow he translated different parts of the Bible, the last work he did being a translation of the Gospel of St. John. King Alfred the Great was the third translator. While battling with the Danes and giving laws to his people, he found time to translate many books. He translated the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the 20th, 21st, and 22nd chapters of Exodus, and several of the Psalms. When he died he was engaged in completing the translation of the Psalms.

Wycliffe's Bible, published in 1383, is the first great monument of English literature. This translation has influenced every succeeding English translation of the Bible to the present day. In 1525 the mantle of Wyc-

liffe fell on William Tyndale, later the martyred hero. In that year he published his translation of the New Testament. On account of his efforts to put the Bible into the hands of the common people he was forced to flee from England, but from his place of refuge on the continent, he poured copies of the English New Testament into England in a flood. By order of Cardinal Wolsey, these books were bought up and destroyed; but as fast as they were bought up and burned at St. Paul's cross, the money paid for them as they were seized, was used to run the printing presses of Tyndale which turned out two or three copies for every one that the authorities destroyed. In 1530 Tyndale published his translation of the Pentateuch, and in 1534, a revision of his New Testament of 1525. In 1536 he was put to death for his zeal and persistence in the work of giving the Bible to the English people in their own language.

From 1525 for three quarters of a century there were numerous versions of the Bible published in England. Among the most noted and influential were: Miles Coverdale's Bible, 1535; Matthew's Bible, 1537; the Great Bible, 1540; the Geneva New Testament, 1557; the Geneva Bible, 1560; the Bishops' Bible, 1568; the Rheims New Testament, 1582; and the Douay Bible, 1609; these last two are translations of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1611 what is known as the Authorized Version was completed. It was translated and published under the direction of King James I of England. When King James came to the throne in 1603 he found the Geneva Bible supported by the people at large, and the Bishops' Bible supported by ecclesiastical authority. In order to harmonize the factions he called together fifty-four learned men from both the High Church and the Independent Church to undertake a new translation. The work was completed in 1611. Although this version did not win immediate acceptance, its qualities were such that it grew steadily in favor and within half a century was accepted by all English Protestants. No other English translation can compare with it in enduring vitality. It is noted for soundness of scholarship, breadth of spirit, and beauty of diction.

For two and a half centuries the Authorized Version held the field with little question of its supremacy. But in the nineteenth century the multiplication of ancient manuscripts hitherto unknown or inaccessible, the advance in textual scholarship, and the inevitable changes in the English vocabulary were strong reasons for a revision of the Authorized Version. Accordingly, in February, 1870, action was taken by the Convocation of Canterbury and a distinguished array of divines and scholars began the work of revision. Not long afterwards American scholars were invited to participate in the work and two American companies began their labors in October, 1872. The revision of the New Testament was completed in 1881, and the entire Revised Version of the Bible appeared in May, 1885.

Since the American committee had been consulted about all the work of revision, its members pledged themselves to give their moral support to the authorized editions published in England and not to issue an edition of their own for a term of fourteen years. During these fourteen years the American Committee had maintained its organization and had labored steadily to prepare a new American edition. So the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible was issued in August, 1901. This edition includes not only the changes agreed upon by all the members of the British and American Committees, the changes proposed by the American Committee to the British revisers, but other textual changes and interpretations resulting from the studies of the American Committee during the fourteen years. Many verbal revisions were made also, in order that the text might be more nearly in accord with English usage in America.

While the Revised Version is far superior to the King James Version in correctness of text, and exactness and clearness in translation, it will be many years before it can so completely win the hearts of the people as to take the place of the old version. It is doubtful whether in beauty of diction, pleasure of rhythm, and felicity of phrase it can rival the Authorized Version. Our ears must have time to become accustomed to its new ca-

dences. Still, while the literary beauty of the old version is to be preferred, it is to be hoped that few will explain their preference as did the youthful English clergyman who objected to the new version in the words: "I much prefer the Authorized Version. A version that was good enough for St. Paul is good enough for me."

CHAPTER V

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE INDIVIDUAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The books of the Old Testament as arranged in the English Bible are classified as follows: The Pentateuch, five books; Books of History, twelve; Books of Poetry, five; Books of the Major Prophets, five; Books of the Minor Prophets, twelve; a total of thirty-nine books. This classification is hardly logical or accurate, for the Pentateuch contains a great deal of history; Ecclesiastes is not a book of poetry though classed as such; while Lamentations may be classed as both poetry and prophecy. The arrangement of the books in the English versions differs much from the order in the Hebrew Bible. There the division is three-fold: "The law," "the prophets," and "the writings."

The word Pentateuch means the "five-volumed book," These five books are sometimes called "the five books of Moses." They are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The books of history are, in order: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The books classed as poetry are: Job, The Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The books of the Greater Prophets are: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The Lesser Prophets are: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

So it will be seen that the unity of the Bible is spiritual and not mechanical. Though bound up in a single volume and called the "Bible," that is, the "Book," these thirty-nine books are separate works written by many different authors at different times.

The Pentateuch

The Book of Genesis. The title means the book of beginnings. The first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis give an account of the world's history down to the origin of the chosen people. An account of the creation of all things is given; the presence of evil in the world is explained; the beginning of civilization is shown; the necessity for the punishment of sin is emphasized; and the diversity of languages and peoples is accounted for. The chapters from 12 to 50 present the history of the fathers of the Hebrew race, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The stories about these great patriarchs make a sort of handbook of life. They furnish materials out of which the Hebrew race has constructed its noblest and most inspiring ideals. Further discussion of these stories will be found in other chapters of this volume.

The Book of Exodus. The word "Exodus" means "a going out." The Book of Genesis ends with the death of Joseph. Exodus opens with an account of the rapid increase of Jacob's descendants in Egypt and of the attempts to repress them. It shows the various steps toward the deliverance from bondage, then the journey to Sinai, the happenings at Sinai, and closes with the erection of the tabernacle in the second year of the wanderings. Genesis is pure narrative; Exodus combines narrative and law; besides, there are other parts dealing with the organization of the church and the state. Here it is shown how the great patriarchal family became a nation. As literature Exodus is not so attractive as Genesis. Genesis presents a succession of hero-stories of absorbing interest; Exodus presents but one hero, Moses, though he is large enough and his life is filled with experiences varied and exciting enough to kindle the imagination and stir the heart.

The Book of Leviticus. The title means that this is a book of laws. The book is a continuation of Exodus. It opens with an account of the laws which should govern the offerings and the ritual of the Hebrew sanctuary. The contents are purely legislative, the laws

being civil, ceremonial, moral, religious, and sanitary. There are presented the fundamental laws of sacrifice, of purification, of atonement, and of vows and tithes. There is a section of several chapters called the "Law of Holiness," which is thought to be the oldest part of the Bible. Deuteronomy is chiefly a manual for the daily duties of the Hebrew, while Leviticus is a manual for the priest, giving the details of religious ceremonies over which he must preside.

The Book of Numbers. This book is so called because it gives an account of two numberings of the people, at Sinai, and at Moab. In character it is much like Exodus, containing history, law, and accounts of the organization of the nation. It is a brief account of what the nation did from the time it left Sinai till it arrived on the eastern border of Canaan. The book opens with a mustering of all the fighting men. There was to be hard fighting and every man "from twenty years old and upward," was enrolled in the army. The narrative is not so stirring as that of Genesis or Exodus, the events of the years of wandering in the wilderness being neither thrilling nor heroic.

After the mustering the whole nation moves to the southern border of Canaan, spies are sent northward through "the promised land," and report a goodly land "flowing with milk and honey," but presenting so many obstacles to their invasion that it is not advisable to attempt a conquest. The people are panic-stricken and begin a retreat whose wanderings cover a period of thirty-eight years. The most attractive parts of the book are those in which Moses is brought before us, "in his solitary grandeur, patient strength, and heroic faith; steadfast amidst jealousy, suspicion, and rebellion, and indicated by God himself as a prophet of transcendent privilege and power."

One interesting feature of the book is the fragments of ancient poetry which it contains. One of these is quoted from an old book called "The Book of the Wars of the Lord," and all, doubtless, belong to a period earlier than the date of the narrative. The longer oracular poems spoken by Balaam are fresh and vigor-

ous in form and imagination and are filled with a high sense of Israel's national destiny.

The Book of Deuteronomy. The name of this book indicates that it is a duplicate copy of the law. It was so called by the Alexandrian Jews because they regarded it as a restatement of all preceding legislation. There is first a historical introduction giving the time and place at which the discourses following were delivered. Then follow the three orations of Moses. In the first he reviews the circumstances of the journey of the Israelites to the border of Canaan, and concludes with an eloquent and practical appeal not to forget the lessons learned at Sinai. The second discourse begins with chapter 5, rehearses the Ten Commandments as the basis of all the Mosaic legislation, and gives an exposition of the law regarding reverence for God, and the duties and obligations regarding the sanctuary, political life, and social and domestic relations. The third discourse begins with chapter 27. This oration insists upon loyalty to Jehovah, appeals to Israel to accept the terms of the Deuteronomic covenant, gives promise of restoration, if the nation shall show proper tokens of penitence, and sets before Israel the choice of life or death, blessing or cursing. Then follow the call and installation of Joshua, and the book concludes with the Song and Blessing of Moses.

The purpose of Deuteronomy was to set forth the true nature of Israel's religious foundation, the laws that the people were to obey, and the spirit in which they were to obey them. It was really a great manifesto against the dominant tendencies of the times in which it was written. In a literary way its influence upon subsequent books of the Old Testament was very great.

Books of History

The Book of Joshua. This book is named from its chief character, Joshua, the successor to Moses. In its general characteristics it is much like parts of the Pentateuch. In classifying the books of the Bible it is sometimes added to the Pentateuch, the whole being then

called the Hexateuch. It covers a period of about twenty-five years, from the crossing of the Jordan to the allotment of land among the tribes. The first twelve chapters give an account of the conquest of Palestine; the next ten chapters contain full details of the division of the land among the tribes; and the last two chapters tell of two farewell addresses of Joshua, and of his death and burial. As literature the Book of Joshua presents many dull chapters but some parts of stirring interest. Joshua is the only striking figure, but we do not stand in awe of him as we did of Moses and we do not become acquainted with him as we did with Jacob and Joseph. A few incidents are most vividly and effectively put before us: the taking of Jericho, the sin and punishment of Achan, the campaign against Ai, the stratagem of the Gibeonites, and the famous battle at Bethhoron.

The Book of Judges. This book, named from the title given the rulers of the time, presents pictures of a period in the history of Israel when the people were trying to gain complete possession of the land and to achieve national unity. It consists largely of hero stories fitted into a chronological framework whose object is to show, by a definite formula, that the prosperity of Israel must depend upon the nation's faithfulness and devotion to Jehovah. The book is fragmentary and the events are chiefly local and tribal, not national. The judges were military dictators with religious authority, a sort of union of the warrior and the religious reformer. The extent of their rule was generally local. This may be called the age of heroes. As men were needed, they were raised up for particular emergencies. It was an age of lawlessness: during all this period there is no reference to the law of Moses.

The book may be divided into three parts, the preface, the main narrative, and the appendix. The preface, consisting of two chapters and six verses, recounts a number of incidents of the time of Joshua and presents a formula according to which the history of the period repeats itself. The main narrative gives account of the working of the formula through a specified series of

years, with emphasis on the exploits of particular judges. The appendix, five chapters, describes in detail two incidents belonging to the period: the migration of a part of the tribe of Dan, to the north, and the war of the other tribes against Benjamin, growing out of the outrage at Gibeah.

The Book of Judges is a most interesting story book. The characters set forth are real men and women and the incidents narrated are natural, vivid, striking. We can understand and sympathize with Gideon in his spectacular daring, Jephthah in his fanatical devoutness, Deborah in her exalted patriotism, and Samson in his fun and folly. The rigid chronological and didactic framework into which these stories are fitted can not destroy their charm. The song of Deborah, giving an account in poetry of the disastrous defeat of the army of Sisera, is a splendid relic from the early war lyrics of Israel.

The Book of Ruth. This is a story of the time of the Judges. It is a picture of piety, contentment, love, devotion, and tolerance in strange contrast to the idolatry, bloodshed, and violence of the age. Its purpose is to give an account of the ancestry of King David, and it may have been written as a protest against Ezra's severity concerning foreign wives. An analysis of this book will be found in another chapter of this volume.

The Book of I Samuel. The two books of Samuel, so called because Samuel is the chief figure at the opening of the story, as found in the English versions, form but one book in the old Hebrew Bible. In the Septuagint it was divided into two books, as was done also with the following Book of Kings, and the four resulting books were called 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Books of the Kings. First Samuel opens with events belonging to the age of the Judges when Eli was priest at Shiloh. The narrative presents the last days of Eli, the entire life of Samuel, the reign of Saul, the anointing of David, his life as an outlaw, his fame as a warrior, and closes with the death of Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa. First Samuel is a fine piece of Old Testament historical writing. There are great men presented in its pages; Sam-

uel, a majestic figure, the founder of the monarchy; Saul, one of the saddest and most dramatic characters in Bible history; and David the noble young man preparing himself for a greater career as king of Israel. The tragic incidents in Saul's career, the romantic outlaw life of David, and the ideal friendship of Jonathan and David are set forth with vividness and power.

The Book of II Samuel. This book is closely connected with First Samuel. In the first chapter there is an account of the swift runner telling the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan to David in his far away place of refuge. He is overwhelmed with grief and gives expression to his sorrow in a beautiful poem of mourning, one of the most spontaneous and picturesque elegies in any language. The first chapters of the book tell of David's rule over Judah for seven and a half years, of his being chosen king of the whole of Israel, of his selection of the captured city of Jerusalem as his political capital, of the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem, and of the extending of the boundaries of the kingdom from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. The central part of the book gives an account of the court life and the unfortunate intrigues of David's family. The last five chapters detail various disconnected matters and events.

The Book of I Kings. The first two chapters of this book give an account of the last days of David, of the plot of Adonijah to make himself king, and of the placing of Solomon on the throne. In the nine following chapters are recorded the internal relations of the monarchy, its foreign relations, its general condition of wealth and weakness, and a prediction of its speedy disruption. In chapter twelve begins an account of the division of the tribes, and the remaining ten chapters present the varying fortune of the two new kingdoms. This section of the book is made up of brief summaries of the reigns of the kings, interspersed with longer stories of the interesting and exciting careers of the prophets. In the shorter narratives the facts are fitted into a stereotyped chronological framework which makes much of the recital seem mechanical. The

stories in this book are more formal and didactic than those in the two preceding books. There are many vivid pictures, but we do not know the inner life of Solomon as we do that of David or Saul or Samuel. However, the stories of Elijah and Elisha found in the two books of Kings are among the most vivid narratives of the Old Testament.

The Book of II Kings. The book of First Kings closes with the death of Ahab. Second Kings opens with Ahaziah on the throne of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah. Elijah is closing his spectacular career as the national prophet of Israel, to be followed by the more commonplace Elisha. The interwoven fortunes of Judah and Israel are followed until Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, overcomes Hoshea, Israel's last king, and carries the people into captivity, thus ending the history of the northern kingdom (721 B. C.). The eight closing chapters follow the decline of Judah to its overthrow.

The Books of The Chronicles, I and II. The books of the Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, are evidently the work of a single author. The Chronicles cover the period from Adam to the edict of Cyrus permitting the exiles to return to Judah, 537 B. C. They thus cover the same period covered by the historical books from Genesis to Second Kings, but their point of view is very different. The author got his materials from these historical books and from a number of other books named in the narrative but not now in existence. The first ten chapters of I Chronicles are introductory and devoted principally to genealogies from Adam to David and after. The last nineteen chapters go over again the history of the reign of David. The first nine chapters of II Chronicles are devoted to the history of Solomon and the remaining twenty-seven chapters, to the rest of the kings. As far as possible, everything discreditable to David, Solomon, and the other righteous kings of Judah is omitted from these books, and since the northern kingdom was not regarded as a part of the true Israel, it is almost entirely ignored, even Elijah and Elisha being scarcely mentioned. The point of

view in these books is that God has for this people a particular mission and that all the happenings of their long and varied history were intended to work out that one purpose.

The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These books occupy the last place in the Old Testament record of the history of the Hebrew people. The period covered in them extends from the time of the first return from captivity (536 B. C.), to the second visit of Nehemiah to Palestine (432 B. C.). The first six chapters of Ezra give an account of the work done by Zerubbabel as governor, the chief of which is the rebuilding of the temple through many delays and discouragements. The last four chapters give an account of the journey of Ezra from the Persian court to Jerusalem and of his work and reforms.

The Book of Nehemiah may be divided into four parts: the first is the story of Nehemiah's coming to Jerusalem and of his rebuilding the walls. The second gives an account of the wonderful revival of interest in the Scriptures through the influence of Ezra and Nehemiah. The third part consists of lists of dwellers in Jerusalem, the names of country towns inhabited by returned Jews, names of priests and Levites, and of priestly and Levitical families who returned in the time of Zerubbabel.

The last section gives an account of the dedication of the walls, of the second return of Nehemiah, and of the reforms which he then instituted.

The Book of Esther. The scenes of the Book of Esther are laid in the court of Ahasuerus, or Xerxes. It is a book of thrilling interest and of unusual literary value. There is a study of this book in another chapter of this volume.

The Books of Poetry

The five books classed as poetry are Job, The Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The fact is that the book of Ecclesiastes is not in the form of poetry and that another book of the Bible, Lamenta-

tions, not classed as poetry does have that form. However, we shall discuss Ecclesiastes in this group as we are here following the old classification.

The Book of Job. The old theory was that the Book of Job was written by Moses, but it is now believed to belong to a much later period. The main part of the book consists of a discussion carried on by Job, his three friends, Elihu, and Jehovah, in a series of poetic discourses. The discussion is introduced and concluded by brief prose narratives, the Prologue and the Epilogue. The problem of the poem is to discover whether righteousness in men is disinterested, and whether the suffering which a man must endure in the world is always sent as a punishment for sin. A brief study of the book will be found in another chapter of this volume.

The Book of Psalms. The Hebrew title for this book is a word meaning "praise-songs." This volume is not simply one book but is made up of five books containing the work of a number of authors. There are one hundred and fifty of the psalms and they were written through a period of possibly 1000 years. It is a wonderful collection of sacred poetry, lofty in thought and feeling, and touching all the vicissitudes of human experience from the depths of trouble to the heights of joy. There is a further discussion of the Psalms in another chapter of this volume.

The Book of Proverbs. The Book of Proverbs, like the Book of Job, deals with the system of Providential rewards and punishments, but deals with their practical application rather than with their theological significance. The fundamental idea set forth is that the world is morally governed. There are seven divisions of the chapters of this book: The praise of wisdom, chapters I to IX; the proverbs of Solomon, chapters X to XXII; the sayings of the wise, chapters XXIII to XXIV; the second selection of Solomon's proverbs, chapters XXV to XXIX; the words of Augur, chapter XXX; the words of King Lemuel, chapter XXXI: 1–9; an acrostic poem in praise of the good wife, chapter XXXI: 10–31.

The wise men who spoke these proverbs were a distinct class apart from priests and prophets. They were keen

observers of all the relations of life. They brought into sharp contrast with each other the wise and the foolish, the rich and the poor, the slothful and the diligent; and such deep knowledge of human nature did they have that their sayings are as fresh and true to nature as if spoken to-day.

The Book of Ecclesiastes. This book, as has been said before, although classed as a poem, is really in the form of prose. It deals with the meaning and value of life, discusses the question whether life, under the most favorable circumstances, is really worth living. It is written in the name of Solomon, but simply as a matter of literary form. In chapters one and two the "Preacher" reviews the different objects which men pursue, labor, wisdom, pleasure, riches, and finds in each only vanity and vexation of spirit. Chapters three and four declare that there is a time and season for all things but wonder who can find them. Human society is surveyed and only trouble, failure, and disappointment are seen. Chapters five to twelve present materials somewhat obscure, yet the conclusion is not so pessimistic as in the first chapter; the real aim of life and the true basis of happiness are made clear.

The Song of Solomon. This poem is either a primitive drama or a collection of love-songs. The book has been included in the canon because the Hebrews regarded it as an allegory of the love of Jehovah and Israel, and the Christian Fathers held the same view except that Christ and the Church were substituted for Jehovah and Israel. See further account of this book in another chapter.

The Major Prophets

The Book of Isaiah. Isaiah is reckoned the greatest of all the prophets of the Old Testament. Little is known of the details of his life, yet he was a part of many of the stirring events depicted in his prophecies. The book is a long one, consisting of sixty-six chapters. Most scholars attribute the work to two different authors, the First Isaiah being credited with the first

thirty-nine chapters, and the Second Isaiah, with the last twenty-seven chapters. The first division deals with prophecies about Israel and Judah and foreign nations, Assyria being the great enemy. The second part may be called the "Book of Consolations." It is a continuous prophecy dealing hopefully with the restoration of Israel from the Babylonian captivity and presenting enthusiastic pictures of the ideal kingdom and the Messianic King.

In literary power the writings of Isaiah take high rank. He uses a wealth of appropriate and vivid illustrations. For these he draws on all regions and aspects of nature and on every department of human life. He is orator, poet, teacher. He has the declamatory eloquence and fluency of the orator, the fine imagination and wonderful vision of the poet, and the didactic concreteness, the passionate earnestness, and the singleness of purpose, of the devoted teacher. The last twenty-six chapters are full of fine strains of poetry and oratory made vivid by a glorious imagination, and impressive by dramatic outbursts of lofty fervor.

The Book of Jeremiah. This book is a combination of history, biography, and prophecy. Jeremiah lived in the midst of the tragic scenes of the destruction of Jerusalem. His words of warning and exhortation were unheeded by his countrymen, who even persecuted him for his plain speaking. He was deeply affected by their attitude and by the ruin which he foresaw would come upon his country. So he breaks out in bitter lamentations and cries aloud to God for vengeance. The book closes with an account of the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans and the sending of the people into exile.

There are many new ideas presented in Jeremiah's writings. Two grand thoughts are the ideality and the universality of religion. He declares that every man as such is born a child of God; that a pure mind and a pure heart are all that God requires of a man. Jeremiah's life was so troubled, so sad, so misunderstood, that his writings are saturated with gloom. But it is not right to say that his life-story is pathetic; it is stronger than that—it is tragic; it is the story of a

courageous and resourceful man fighting a losing battle. The book is indeed a remarkable "human document."

The Book of Ezekiel. The prophet Ezekiel was carried in captivity to Babylon, B. C. 597. He was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah. Ezekiel marks the transition from the prophet to the scribe or theologian in Jewish history. The older prophets were first of all preachers, and their utterances were usually reduced to writing by others. But Ezekiel not only delivered his prophecies to audiences, but wrote them down methodically in a book. His prophecies are rendered vivid and sometimes obscure by his use of visions and symbols. The first twenty-four chapters of the book deal with predictions of the fall of Jerusalem. The next eight chapters present prophecies regarding foreign nations, and the last sixteen chapters speak of the restoration and re-allotment of the land, of the ideal temple, and of Jehovah—Triumphant. The literary style of Ezekiel is much more artificial than that of Isaiah. There is great elaboration of details and profusion of strange and obscure symbolism.

The Book of Lamentations. An ancient tradition credits this work to Jeremiah, but modern scholars say that the author is unknown. The book is poetic in form, each of the five chapters being a complete and independent poem. The first four are alphabetic acrostics. In chapters one, two, and four, each verse of the twenty-two begins with the corresponding letter of the Hebrew alphabet, in order; in chapter three each letter is given three verses, all three beginning with the corresponding letter of the alphabet. In chapter five there are twenty-two verses, but they are not arranged in alphabetical order.

The Book of Daniel. This book consists of twelve chapters, six relating stories about Daniel and his companions, and six presenting his dreams and visions. The stories of the first division are: faithfulness to a national law; Nebuchadnezzar's dream; idolatry and the fiery furnace; the tree cut down; the tragic feast; the lions' den. The last division details four prophetic

visions: the four beasts; the ram and the he-goat; the seventy weeks; the last vision. The four beasts symbolize the four great world powers, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Persian, and Macedonian. The second vision shows the four-fold development of the Macedonian power. In the third vision the angel Gabriel delivers a message regarding the Messianic kingdom. The last vision foretells the course of events under the tyrannical king Antiochus Epiphanes.

The Minor Prophets

The Book of Hosea. This book is the first and longest of the twelve. Hosea lived in the northern kingdom. It appears that his wife had been unfaithful to him and he uses this experience as an allegory of the unfaithfulness of Israel to Jehovah. In the last eleven chapters he denounces Israel for its combination of immorality and ritualism and for the cruelty and oppression of nobles and priests.

The Book of Joel. Apparently the prophecies presented in this book were delivered on the occasion of a plague of locusts which had been so severe as to cause the regular temple offerings to be suspended. The prophet proclaims the "Day of the Lord" as a season of terrible calamities from which Judah may be delivered by repentance; then the spirit of the Lord will be poured out upon the people.

The Book of Amos. Amos declares that he is not a professional prophet, but a peasant of Tekoa, "a herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees." There are three divisions of the book. The first proclaims the condemnation and punishment of heathen nations; the second arraigns Israel and pronounces its doom; and the third presents five visions depicting the sure destruction of Jerusalem, and closes with a picture of the coming of the new kingdom and the reign of plenty.

The Book of Obadiah. The occasion of this prophecy was the brutality of Edom in rejoicing over the captivity and ruin of Jerusalem. The one chapter speaks of Edom's guilt and punishment, the extension of the

punishment to all heathen nations, and of the promise of the restoration of Israel.

The Book of Jonah. Although this book stands among the prophetical books it does not contain prophecies; it is an anonymous narrative. A more extended account is given on another page.

The Book of Micah. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, and pronounced judgment upon Israel for national sins, particularly for social sins and covenant-breaking. He then recounts what God has done for Israel and promises mercy and restoration after repentance.

The Book of Nahum. This book has but one theme, the destruction of Nineveh. The prophet announces the coming ruin of that city because of its defiance of Jehovah, its oppression of Judah, and because it was a "bloody city, all full of lies and robbery."

The Book of Habakkuk. The situation as seen by the prophet in this book is that Jerusalem must certainly fall before the rising Chaldean power, and he is greatly distressed because he can not understand how such a result can advance righteousness in the world. So he challenges Jehovah to defend his action in thus governing the world. It is the problem of Job over again. Jehovah is represented as answering the challenge and telling the prophet that he can see but a small part of Jehovah's great plan, that so far as the Chaldeans are wicked they too must perish, and that righteousness will at last prevail in the world.

The Book of Zephaniah. Zephaniah was a great grandson of Hezekiah and prophesied during the reign of Josiah. A dark day of destruction for all nations is foretold. Judah shall suffer because of the wickedness of its rulers, priests, and prophets; Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia, and Nineveh shall in succession be ruined. But there shall be a purged and purified remnant whom the Lord shall bring back from captivity.

The Books of Haggai and Zechariah. When these two prophets appeared, 42,000 returned exiles had been living in Jerusalem sixteen years. For two years they had worked at rebuilding the Temple; for fourteen years

the work had been at a standstill. So Haggai and Zechariah were commissioned to arouse the Jews to greater energy in the rebuilding. Their prophecies delivered in burning and inspiring words stirred the people to such enthusiasm that the Temple soon rose from its ruins.

The Book of Malachi. This book is anonymous and undated, but clearly belongs to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Temple had been restored but the people were disappointed because they had not realized a glorious Messianic kingdom. Malachi seeks to recall the allegiance of the people to Jehovah and revive the national spirit. He shows that Jehovah is the moral governor of the world and that it pays to serve him. The book closes with an exhortation to the people to obey the law, and with a promise of the coming of Elijah.

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES

CHAPTER VI

CHARACTERISTICS OF OLD TESTAMENT STORIES

The Great Teacher in his teaching made frequent and effective use of stories. He thus made the abstract ideas, the vital truths of his Gospel clear and concrete to his hearers. When a lawyer asked him the meaning of the word neighbor, he defined it by telling the immortal story of The Good Samaritan. In order to make forcible application of the wonderful Sermon on the Mount, he concluded it with the story of The Two Houses. In the ancient days when the prophet Nathan wanted to reach the conscience of King David, he told him the simple, moving story of the One Ewe Lamb; and when Jotham wished to convince the people of Shechem of their folly in selecting Abimelech to rule over them, he recited to them the Fable of the Trees.

Stories are valuable for many purposes; they may entertain, instruct, portray life, move to action, or teach love for virtue and abhorrence of vice. To amuse and entertain is an important function of the story. We can not live always in the work-a-day world. We are creatures of imagination and must at times be taken out of our busy lives and forget for a while the cares that beset us. Stories make this possible. We who have not the creative power may live in the imagination of the more gifted. The stories of Ruth, of Esther, and of Joseph appeal strongly to the imagination and are entertaining although their main purpose is to give definite moral instruction. The stories that tell of the doings of Samson have a less serious purpose. He is the nation's humorous hero who discomfits Israel's enemies by playing pranks on them, pranks which are fun for Samson but death for the Philistines. One example of Samson's tragic pranks is found in Judges, XV:

1 to 8. Samson has returned to Timnath to visit his wife whom he had left in a huff because she had betrayed the meaning of his riddle. He finds that she has been given by her father to another man and he takes characteristic revenge.

And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure. And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took fire brands, and turned tail to tail, and put a fire brand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives. Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire. And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

Another function of the story is to instruct. This is the chief purpose of "The Pilgrim's Progress." "Oliver Twist" was written to expose the evils of the poor-law system of England; "Bleak House" is an indictment of the courts of equity; "Never Too Late to Mend" was written to condemn the English penal system; and doubtless the Book of Ruth is a protest against the narrow exclusiveness of the Jews of the time of Ezra. There are many stories of purpose, both long and short, in the Old Testament. The story of the intended sacrifice of Isaac is plainly a lesson in supreme obedience, to the Hebrews of all succeeding generations. It is a story of fascinating interest told briefly, swiftly, and vividly.

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third

day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.

And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto the young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

Still another function of the story is to portray human life. Stories may give us the most vivid pictures of life and manners of other times. Homer is the best authority on early Greek life. Lorna Doone is a fascinating picture of the life and times of Charles II; and Sir Walter Scott and Dr. Watson give true and vivid pictures of early and modern Scotch life. Stories may go further and portray the innermost life of the individual. The historian tells only what has been seen and heard, the external facts, while the true story-teller

gathering together the facts, transfuses them in the crucible of his imagination and presents a living picture of the whole; it is no half-tone portrait; it is a living, breathing picture. Many books of the Bible present such pictures and portraits. It is possible to construct from the narratives of Genesis, for example, the world of the ancient patriarchs in many definite details, and to see the men, who speak and act, as real, living men of heroic size.

But the highest function of the story is to depict the moral forces of life, the forces which make for good or evil. If it portrays life faithfully, the reader will revolt from the evil because it is ugly and repulsive, and be drawn to the good because it is beautiful and attractive. Many of the Bible stories show unusual directness in striking at the heart of a situation where right and wrong have been confused. Two shining examples of such stories, incisive and effective, are Nathan's story told to David (2 Samuel, XII), and Jotham's fable recited to the men of Shechem (Judges, IX).

It will be remembered that King David, when he wished to make the beautiful Bathsheba his wife, caused her husband, the faithful and loyal Uriah, to be put in the forefront of the battle where he was killed. The prophet Nathan was sent to David to reprimand him for this gross sin. He put his rebuke in the form of a story.

There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but he took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man!

Poe's theory of the short-story is that the writer must first choose a single effect to be wrought out, and then make every word tend toward the preëstablished design. This story is a model in terseness and swiftness. Nathan knew the effect he wanted to produce and made every phrase tend toward it. The design is skillfully concealed until in the last sentence, it flashes forth like a stunning lightning stroke.

After the death of Gideon, Abimelech, one of his seventy sons, was ambitious to succeed his father as the ruler of Israel. He received financial and military aid from his mother's people and took upon himself the authority of a king. To make himself secure he killed all his brethren except Jotham who hid himself. Then all the people of Shechem gathered together to formally crown their new king.

And when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you: The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then the trees said unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon. If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Gideon and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you: but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem. And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

Besides the functions given and illustrated, stories have a peculiar value in the education of children. Richer educational material for this purpose may be found in stories than in any other form of literature.

Well chosen stories skillfully and sympathetically presented will open the minds and hearts of children marvelously. A very practical use of them may be made in adding interest to the drudgery of the ordinary lessons in reading, writing, and spelling. All the faculties and interests of children may be appealed to by stories. They concentrate the flitting attention, cultivate the feeling, train the imagination, and teach simple lessons through concrete images. They do in fact give experience in living, living which, besides cultivating the faculties of the child, is a pure and continuous joy.

CHAPTER VII

GENESIS AS A STORY BOOK FOR CHILDREN

It is the birthright of the child to know, in the years when he can understand them, the old stories that have grown out of the heart and imagination of the race. They contain elements of thought and imagination that the ages have softened and refined and each succeeding generation has pronounced worthy and significant The particular elements that children's stories must have are found in richer abundance in the Genesis stories than in any others.

Children's stories must be full of wonder, must appeal to the imagination; must have concreteness and definiteness; must have an atmosphere of freshness and vigor; must present feelings not over-refined, not artificial, not romantic; must have indeed a little primitive savagery; must have strength of plot, something happening all the time. There must be, also, another element which defies analysis, an ethical element, a something that has been added to them as they have been told through the ages, a spiritual force that came out of life and can beget life; herein is the chief value of stories.

It is interesting and important to test the Genesis stories by these requirements. First, children's stories must be full of wonder. These stories fulfill this condition remarkably well. At the very beginning there is a Great Being who speaks the word and the world takes shape. He says, "Let there be light," and the miracle of light comes. He creates a wonderful garden out of which flow four great rivers that go to the four quarters of the globe. And in that garden are planted wonderful trees, trees of the most luxuriant foliage, bril-

liant blossoms, and delicious fruits. Then there is the story of the great flood that covered all the earth, of the large ship in which were collected animals of every kind to save them from death, of its floating upon the waters until they subsided, and it rested on Mount Ararat. Then there is the story of the rainbow, that seven-hued arch which was to be to man a symbol of mercy and protection; also the story of the tower of Babel, and the tragic tale of the cities of the plain consumed by fire from heaven. These and others furnish rich materials for the satisfaction of the wonder-loving desires of the children. In these stories there is a strong appeal to the imagination. Wordsworth said, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." To the Hebrew heaven was ever close at hand. To him it was no surprise that God's messengers came and went familiarly between the earth and the near sky. He had little sense of surprise or mystery even in the presence of the miraculous. These stories appeal to the imagination of children because their writers were children perennially.

The third characteristic of children's stories is concreteness and definiteness. The Old Testament is all pictorial. "All the past is taken up in metaphor for the future." Abstract truth is made concrete forever by a story. The story of Cain and Abel is worth a whole volume on the sin of violence and murder. The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden makes clear the problem of temptation and sin.

Children's stories must be somewhat primitive, too; not over refined, not artificial, not romantic. Even a little ferocity is desirable. This may seem strange but it is true. This period of ferocity is a shortened heritage of primitive instincts—shortened we are glad to say—but it can not be ignored. Any truthful account of the history of any people must tell of two forces in conflict, human nature, brutal, savage, domineering, and divine nature at work upon the lower nature with infinite persistence and patience. You can not leave out the hoof, the nail, and the claw. So Bible stories have besides their simplicity, tenderness and passion for holiness, elements of cruelty and horror.

There must be feeling in children's stories, but not of the passionate kind, not the artificial kind. The child will enjoy a love scene but it must be matter-of-fact and simple. In Genesis, XXIX:20 we read, "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her." This illustrates the simple, apparently unemotional way the Bible has of telling a love story. It is effective, but a modern novel would have made half a score of chapters and as many "balcony scenes" out of it. Children's stories must be simple and natural; Bible stories are remarkable for their simplicity and naturalness.

Children demand interesting plots in their stories; there must something happen and keep on happening. There can be no psychological analysis and reflection on things in general while the action of the story waits. In the Bible stories are found thrilling narratives and interesting characters who go through most exciting experiences. There are far-reaching actions told in a few words. The story of Joseph is interesting to children from start to finish, from the time he puts on his little coat of many colors to the time he greets his venerable father who has come down into the land of Egypt to spend the remainder of his life with his famous son.

But the peculiar greatness of the Bible stories is due to their ethical qualities. No other stories furnish so richly the knowledge and feeling needed for the guidance of the child when he begins to know right and wrong; when he first becomes personally acquainted with sin, feels the consequent fear and shame, and gropes blindly for light and leading. The Genesis stories seem especially intended for children in their first struggles with evil.

All minds should be fed, in their youth, on "the dream stuff of the poets and sages." The myths of Greece and Rome are good dream stuff, but the Bible furnishes better. The highest use of literature is not to fill us with facts, but to set us to thinking and feeling. The old stories should fill the children with the spirit of the great men of whom they tell. The most striking and significant of the Genesis stories are The Fall, Cain

and Abel, and The Flood. Here follow interpretations of the three.

The Great Separation

This story of the Garden of Eden deals with the greatest problem of the world, the problem of sin. The title usually given to the story is Paradise and the Fall. The meaning is better conveyed by the title given above, for it is the story of man's separation from God. Many readers view the story as one of symbolism. It need make no difference to the children whether we accept it as a literal story or not. The lesson is unmistakable in either case. Even as a true story the meaning is symbolical. The serpent symbolizes evil and represents the force of temptation, and man's heel crushing the serpent is holiness crushing evil.

The most perplexing of all problems is the problem of sin, not only as a philosophical question, but as an intensely practical one which must be dealt with in the case of every child when he first awakens to a knowledge of right and wrong. We should expect this great guidebook in matters of conduct to furnish some teaching on this perplexing point, and we are not disappointed. The story is clear and illuminating. Every one must acknowledge that it is a faithful transcript of human experience. Its teachings may be stated as follows: there is a period of innocence for all of us, then sin comes bringing an inevitable struggle. If we lose in the struggle there follow a sense of shame, a feeling of fear, and an attempt to hide ourselves. Guilt naturally brings separation. Then punishment and the curse must follow.

In every human life there is a period of innocence, and in this period there is no training of the will through the exercise of choice, hence no moral character. It is a law of life that moral character must be developed by struggle. Even boys will recognize the fact that their playmate for whom all things are made easy, is but a weakling. That boy is to be pitied from whom all temptation has been removed by fond and foolish parents. This old story shows the true method.

A tempter was permitted to suggest to the two children in the garden that their Father's command of irksome obedience was not fair. So in the world, every child may obey or disobey as he chooses.

Shame and fear naturally follow transgression. The innocent, unoffending child does not think of himself. He is so full of thoughts of father, mother, brother, sister, playmates, and pets that he is not at all self-conscious. It is psychologically true that when he has done wrong, he does think of himself, he wants to hide himself. Adam and Eve had not thought of themselves as they went about their tasks in innocent joy; but now their eyes are no longer turned to their kind Father, to the beautiful things of the garden, but upon themselves. They have learned the first lesson in selfishness and guilt and fear. God had been accustomed to walk in the garden to meet them, and they, like children ran joyfully to meet him when they heard him coming, just as children run to meet their father coming home to them at the close of the day. But now when these first children hear their Father's footsteps they are, for the first time, startled and afraid. At his coming they are in terror instead of being glad and happy.

Separation is inevitable after disobedience and sin. No one will deny that we have something of God's spirit in us always; that this spirit dominates us in our hours of innocent goodness. But this spirit can not dwell with disobedience and sin. It withdraws from us when we admit these two into our lives. This separation is inevitable. Children may not understand very clearly the symbolism of the story, or not at all the philosophy of it, but they can understand that these first children not having obeyed their Father, could not go on living in his garden. Separation must come. So Adam and Eve were sent out of the garden, but not because God was angry with them; the story does not say that. They were sent out from the protection of the garden to be tested further. They had had their chance and had failed. The next test must be made under very different and very much harder conditions. The

harder conditions constitute the curse. The sentence was really a punishment but the punishment was a blessing to them. It meant hardship but it meant at the same time character-development. No one should misread the story and say that a curse was placed upon them. The curse was placed upon the earth so that their labor in subduing it should be greater. There must be a difference between the luxurious life of the garden and the life of toil in the world, which makes for character. Man in subduing the earth is to subdue and at the same time to exalt himself. The real punishment is the separation from the great Father who had been so kind to them.

Cain and Abel, or the Lesson of Self-Control

The story of Cain and Abel is a story to teach self-control. That is, it is a story of unbridled passion which indirectly teaches the lesson of self-control. The refusal of Cain's offering is not important, except that it gives an opportunity for him to control himself or to give full rein to his passions. Cain was not such a wicked man but that he might have had his offering accepted if he had tried again, in humility seeking to know wherein he had failed at first. The Lord speaks very kindly to him, wishing to give him another chance: "Why art thou wroth and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? And if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door, and unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it."

Every disobedient child is like Cain so long as he is resentful and does not wish to "do well" again. "And if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door," crouching, ready to spring, waiting to be master over Cain, "but do thou rule over it." In the new version the word coucheth takes the place of lieth. This new word makes a stronger appeal to the imagination. It is as if Cain's sin were some creature, wild and watchful, patiently waiting for a chance to use its poison fangs. Cain is heedless and his tiger-like anger masters him. This implied allegory is vivid and striking.

1309

"And Cain said unto his brother Abel—and it came to pass when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him." It would appear that there is something omitted from verse 8; it should most likely read: "And Cain said to his brother Abel, let us go into the field." We may believe that Abel accepted the invitation as a reconciliation and went gladly with his brother. Little did he know what was in Cain's heart; for while they were talking in the field together, Cain gave way to his wrath and fell upon Abel and slew him. Again God spoke to Cain, but in what a different way! He was not now trying to induce Cain to be good, but was passing sentence upon him for his dreadful sin. And yet, any child may be shown, and can understand, that God was merciful to Cain even when he was punishing him, as a father always is, or should be, when he punishes his child. He had sent Adam and Eve out of the garden that they might learn by hard work and sorrow how to be good. Now he sends Cain away from his home and family that he may be made better by loneliness and hard work.

The reasons given for Cain's deep grief at his banishment seem to be sufficient, but there is another one implied which may be the strongest one of all. The belief prevailed at that time and for centuries after that God was present only in Palestine; therefore, when Cain went out from the region which had been his home, he would be going out from God's presence and protection. So the mark that was made for him was very significant. No doubt it was a star in the sky or some natural object which, when seen by Cain, should remind him that he was not too far away from his Father to be protected by him, not only from those who might try to kill him, but from all sorts of danger. Another important lesson taught by this story is to be drawn from Cain's answer when Jehovah asked him what had become of his brother Abel. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is a question that selfishness has asked in every age of the world since that time. It is a universal question; and the most satisfactory answer that has ever been given to it is the answer found in the story of the Good Samaritan.

Noah and the Flood

The story of Noah's ark is always popular with children. It appeals to their imagination because of its striking features—the great ship so long in building, the animals so numerous and interesting, the terrible rain storm, the overwhelming flood, the exciting voyage of the great ship over the submerged earth, the anxiety of the inmates, the sending out of the raven, and the dove, the subsidence of the waters, the landing of Noah and his family on the mountain. This is all romantic and wonderful enough to stir the interest of any child.

There is no need to tell children that many other peoples besides the Hebrews have stories of floods; the Greeks, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Scandinavians, and others. Later it will be possible to tell them about these many flood legends, to show them how other stories differ from the one found in the Bible. For it may be shown that this story common to so many peoples has been taken by the writer of Genesis and turned into a story of wonderful significance, of profound religious teaching.

There are two lessons taught with exceeding great emphasis by this story. First, wickedness must be punished; and second, God cares for man when he is obedient, and desires to assure him of his safety. It would appear that the men of those days had few redeeming traits. Their conduct was not only bad, but their thoughts and imaginings were always evil. There is not much room for mercy here. The kindest justice requires fearful punishment. The earth must have a thorough, a cleansing bath. The pollution of the old race must be washed away and the new race have a fresh, clean start in a new, clean world. The second lesson is taught by the lovely symbolism of the rainbow. God had given Cain a sign of mercy in the mark which was appointed to him; and now the whole future race is to remember that heaven and earth are not far apart, that the great Father is always brooding over and protecting his children, and that they may surely know of his loving guardianship. They are given the glorious,

shining arch of promise, an arch which rests upon the earth and rises into the heavens bringing them closer together than men ever before thought they were.

Noah was the first great reformer. Abel and Enoch were good men but did not impress the world. Noah took the wickedness of the world more to heart. He wanted to save the world. And he did, but at a great cost. At that fearful cost men have been taught for all time the important lesson that corruption cannot conquer the world. There will come a time of cleansing and purification. Noah walked forth from the ark upon the clean-washed earth, under the rainbow of hope, to be a shining example of accomplishment to all who hate wickedness and love righteousness.

These interpretations will serve to show how rich Genesis is in story material, and how well suited these stories are to train children in character and conduct. In the first eleven chapters are found stories of primitive life, of a time when standards of conduct and principles of right and wrong were not yet clearly discerned by men. The remaining thirty-nine chapters tell the story of the Patriarchal Family. In these chapters there is a recital of the incidents in the lives of four great world characters, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, whose lives are full of qualities and experiences that influence other lives. From the deeds and characters of these four there can be formulated a pretty complete handbook of life. It is impossible to measure the influence they have had on the world—Abraham, the first and greatest, a pioneer, a pilgrim, and the father of faith; Isaac, the domesticated man, not a far traveler, but a man of patient, faithful industry; Jacob, a Hebrew Ulysses, a born leader and a trickster, but later a man of vision; Joseph, an optimist, the story of whose life has a perpetual charm, and out of which the heart-break and the triumph will never die. It is a wonderful group and their virtues have become permanent ideals in the world.

As further illustrations of the interesting and valuable qualities of Bible stories, and of the method of analyzing them, there are presented in the following

chapters studies of three of the best known and most instructive of the Bible short stories—Ruth, Esther and Jonah. These are books that fulfill well the literary requirements of the short-story, and have also an ethical purpose plainly but artistically presented.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BOOK OF RUTH

Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife was Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab: the name of one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab; for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have a husband also to-night, and should also bear sons; would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and

where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi (*i. e.* "Pleasant"), call me Mara (*i. e.* "Bitter"): for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab; and she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me find favor in thy sight, my Lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou

hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens. And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned; and it was about an ephah of barley.

And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned; and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed. And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? And where wroughtest thou? Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law. Then Naomi, her mother in law, said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing floor. Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid; spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman. And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed

more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth; lie down until the morning.

And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor. Also he said, Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city. And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who art thou my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me: for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law. Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he hath finished the thing this day.

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Hold, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and he said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it besides thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, what day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the kinsman said, I can not redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I can not redeem it. Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor: and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore, the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his

inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses And the Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-lehem: and let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse and the father of David.

Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

Analysis and Comment

The stories of Ruth and Esther are idyls. The word idyl means a little picture, in this use of it, a little picture of life. The primitive idyl is a picture, in either prose or poetry, of simple rustic life. The Book of Ruth is such a story, while the Book of Esther is a royal story of the court of a mighty king. Both are models of literary art with hardly a false note of atmosphere or feeling.

In the Jewish canon the Book of Ruth is classed among the Ketubim, or "Writings," which are the third group of the books of the canon in sacredness and value. It is one of the five books which are read publicly in the synagogues, at certain sacred seasons: The Song of Songs at the Passover; Ruth at Pentecost; Lamentations on the ninth of Ab, the day on which Jerusalem was destroyed; Ecclesiastes at the Feast of Tabernacles; and Esther at the Feast of Purim.

The date of the Book of Ruth is a subject of much controversy. The language seems to indicate a date after the Exile. However, this is said, by some scholars, to be not decisive enough to weigh against other strong considerations. The fact that the writer speaks of the custom of taking off the shoe at the transfer of certain rights and privileges as an archaic one, would indicate a late date. It has been wisely suggested that it was written in Ezra's time; that the severity of the rules regarding foreign wives was not universally approved and some writer of the time wishing to rebuke the narrow exclusiveness of Ezra, produced the story of Ruth to teach a lesson of liberality and toleration.

Scene 1 (I:1–5). *The Calamity.*

A famine in Judea. Elimelech and Naomi, and their sons Mahlon and Chilion seek refuge in Moab, a heathen country. Elimelech dies. The two sons marry women of Moab, Orpah and Ruth. After ten years both husbands die and leave the three widows in poverty and distress.

Scene 2 (I:6–22). *On the Road from Moab.*

Naomi turns toward the land of her fathers. Orpah and Ruth go with her. But Naomi said, "Turn again, my daughters." The love that forsakes: "and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law." The love that is steadfast: "but Ruth clave unto her." The classic formula of devotion. The arrival: "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara."

Scene 3 (II:1–17). *In the Barley Field.*

Ruth the gleaner: "and her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging to Boaz." Boaz the bountiful: "Go not to glean in another field." "And also pull out some for her from the bundles."

The meal of the reapers: "Come hither and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers." Humble prosperity: "and she beat out that which she had gleaned, and it was an ephah of barley."

Scene 4 (II:18–23). *In the home of Naomi.*

Naomi sees the bountiful gleaning and rejoices and blesses Boaz. She counsels Ruth to glean in no other fields.

Scene 5 (III). *At the Winnowing Floor.*

Naomi's appeal to the Levirate custom. She gives minute directions to Ruth. Ruth goes to the threshing-floor. The midnight interview. Boaz accepts the responsibility—if it shall prove to be his right. Ruth returns home.

Scene 6 (IV:1–12). *At the City Gate.*

The place of justice. The jury of ten. The kinsman's decision. Redeeming the land by custom of the shoe. The marriage and the witnesses.

Scene 7. *Naomi the Happy.*

The birth of Obed. Bitterness comforted. "And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom and nursed it." The royal descendant.

Purposes: (1) To give an account of David's ancestors. (2) To enforce the obligation to marry a kinsman's widow. (3) As a counterblast to Ezra's crusade against foreign wives. But what other motive is necessary than the simple pleasure of telling a beautiful, idyllic, charming love story?

The plot of the story of Ruth, as may be seen from the preceding analysis, is not at all complex or startling, being made up of incidents in the uneventful lives of the people of a sleepy little town of Judea, people who are interesting and charming, but not of the great ones of earth. The skill of the narrator is shown in a number of scenes and situations: The pathetic parting scene closing with Ruth's passionate declaration of devotion; the sunny picture of the gleaners in the barley fields; the ideal relation between Boaz and his reapers, as shown by his greeting, "The Lord be with you," and their response, "The Lord bless thee"; the delicacy with which the rather unconventional incident at the

threshing floor is treated; the scene at the city gate when Boaz deals fairly with the nearest of kin, but is plainly anxious to have the redemption fall to him; the happy lot of Naomi, now that bitterness has been turned into joy.

The Levirate custom referred to in the fifth scene, is an interesting institution. The method of attracting the attention of Boaz may have been invented by Naomi, but Ruth's right to appeal to him for protection was based on an ancient law. A widow left without a son must become the wife of the husband's brother, and the oldest son of the union must be counted the child of the deceased brother.

> And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate unto the elders and say: My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother unto me. Then the elders of the city shall call him and speak unto him; and if he stand and say: I like not to take her; then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face and she shall answer and say: So shall it be done unto the man that doth not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed. (Deut. 25: 7–10.)

This is a charming story presenting a quaint courtship of the olden time. There are in it no impossible situations, no unspeakable emotions, no invented characters, no sickly sentiment; all is simple, natural, almost perfect. It is pleasing enough to be restful; gives interesting information about Hebrew life in the time of the judges; presents characters that are natural and life-like; and presents also the moral forces of life so as to attract the reader to the beautiful and the good. Besides these things it gives an account of David's ancestors, enforces the obligation to marry a kinsman's widow, and above and beyond all these, teaches the same lesson of tolerance that is taught so eloquently in the Book of Jonah. Such a book is immortal; its charm increases as time goes on.

CHAPTER IX

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

The scene of the story is laid in Shushan, the palace, in the city of Susa, the Persian capital, the ancient Elam, a few hundred miles north of the Persian Gulf—one of the oldest seats of civilization in the world. The time is about 482 years before Christ.

The story opens with a great feast lasting 180 days, which Ahasuerus gives to the princes and officers of the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of his kingdom. At the end of the long feast he gives a special feast of seven days, and to it are invited only his nobles and officers. On the last day of the seven days' feast he orders his seven eunuchs to bring before him Queen Vashti, unveiled, that his drunken companions may admire her beauty. With wise, womanly courage she refuses to obey the tyrannical summons, which, according to eastern etiquette would violate all sense of propriety and modesty. The courtiers regard Vashti's refusal with consternation. They fear that the wrath of the king will be turned against them, and they seek immediate means to please and pacify him. They first urge him to depose Vashti; and the order is accordingly issued. They then persuade him to the opinion that the queen in her disobedience has not so much wronged him as she has wronged all the princes and officers of the kingdom. "For," they declare, "this deed of the queen will surely come to be known in all the provinces unto all the women; and when it is known that queen Vashti refused to come before the king at his command, what hope can there be that the wives throughout the great kingdom will continue to be respectfully obedient to their husbands?" So the king, forgetting for the time his discomfiture, sends letters to all the provinces,

proclaiming that the man is the head of the household and that this new idea of the independence of woman, of the right of woman to question the authority of the husband to rule the household, should be crushed at once. It was decreed that all wives everywhere should give to their husbands honor and obedience—both to great and small—and that the proclamation should be written among the laws of the Medes and Persians that it might not be altered.

Afterwards when the wrath of King Ahasuerus has subsided and his thoughts turn to the dethroned Vashti, his officers who advised him to depose the queen seek security for themselves in a plan to choose a new queen. They suggest that there be gathered at the palace fair young virgins from every province of the kingdom and that the maiden who shall please the king most shall be made queen instead of Vashti. The plan pleases the king and the maidens are assembled. Mordecai, an attendant at the court, a Jew, places his cousin Esther among the candidates for the king's favor, and so beautiful and charming is she that the king chooses her from among the great company of maidens as being most worthy to sit on the throne as queen of the realm. Soon after the crowning of Esther, Mordecai discovers a conspiracy against the life of the king and makes it known to Esther; she informs the king and the conspirators are arrested and put to death, and a record of the faithful service of Esther and Mordecai is made in the chronicles of the court.

Haman, the villain of the story, is now introduced. He is a cold, shrewd, cunning politician who has worked his way close up to the throne and, as prime minister, is the most influential man in the kingdom. He is not a man of noble blood, but the king issues an order that all men shall nevertheless show him the reverence due to his station. All the courtiers pay deference to him except one, Mordecai, who refuses to bow down before him. Haman determines to be revenged for Mordecai's disrespect. But he will not be satisfied with revenge upon Mordecai alone. He will humble the whole hated race to which Mordecai belongs. Accordingly he ac-

cuses the Jews in the kingdom of disloyalty to the king and asks for authority to put them all to death. So artfully does he put his proposal before the king that the king at once commits the whole matter into his hands, gives him the royal signet ring that he may send out decrees with full authority, and refuses even to accept the large sum of money which Haman promises to pay into the treasury when the property of the condemned Jews is confiscated.

Mordecai learns of the plan to destroy his people, but is helpless to avert the coming danger. He sends a copy of the proclamation to Esther, with the urgent request that she go before the king and protest against the slaughter of her people. She replies, "I can do nothing; for thirty days the king has not called me before him; I am no longer in favor with the king; I can do nothing." But with that sublime faith characteristic of the Hebrew people all through the ages, Mordecai returns answer, "Who knows but that you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" And heroically Esther replies, "I will go into the presence of the king, and if I perish, I perish."

Esther lays her plans with womanly skill and womanly courage. She fasts three days and asks her people in the palace and the city to fast with her. At the end of that time she prepares to present her petition to the king. What a thrilling moment it is! The courtiers stand aghast at the audacity of a woman who would go from the harem unasked into the presence of the king. With beating heart and blushing face she rushes through the throng and throws herself at the king's feet. Is it death or life? If the king does not hold out to her his golden scepter, it is death. There is a pause and Ahasuerus holds out his scepter. "What is your petition?" he asks, "and I will grant it even to the half of my kingdom." She merely begs that he honor her by coming to a banquet of wine that she has prepared for him, and requests that he bring Haman with him.

They sit down to the banquet of wine. The king perceives that there is something weighing on Esther's mind. "What wilt thou have?" he asks, "and it is granted thee

even before thou dost ask it." Some providence withholds her from making known her request. The time is not yet ripe. She replies, "I only ask that we three may banquet together again to-morrow; then I will make known my petition."

Haman goes home from the banquet swelling with a sense of his importance: "Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart." When he reaches his home he can contain himself no longer, but begins to boast to Zeresh his wife and to his friends, of his riches, his favor with the king, his promotion over the princes, and ends with: "Yea, Esther, the queen, did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she prepared but myself! And to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king!" Then the thought of Mordecai's refusal to bow down before him recurs to him, his vindictiveness overcomes his exultation, and he whines to his wife: "Yet all this availeth me nothing as long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the gate!" Then Zeresh suggests that he build a gallows fifty cubits high and on the morrow ask the king's permission to hang Mordecai on it. The suggestion pleases Haman. He sets the carpenters to work to build the gallows and doubtless falls asleep to the music of their hammers.

That night sleep flees from the eyes of the king. Doubtless the strange behavior of Esther disturbs him. He commands the attendants to read to him. They read the court records and providentially light on the part of the record which tells how the life of the king has been saved through the vigilance of Mordecai. "What has been done for Mordecai?" asks the king. "There is no record of any reward," replies the reader. Then the king falls asleep and when he wakes in the morning his first words are, "What shall be done for him whom the king delighteth to honor?" Just then Haman comes into the presence of the king to make his request. He hears the words of the king and thinks that he is planning some new honors for his prime minister. So he audaciously proposes that the man whom the king delighteth to honor shall be set on the king's horse, shall wear the royal crown and robe, and shall be conducted

through the city by the chief nobleman of the court, who shall cry everywhere: "Thus doth King Ahasuerus to him whom the king delighteth to honor." "Well said, counsellor," cries the king, "Mordecai the Jew, is the man whom I delight to honor; and what nobleman so well suited to lead the horse as Haman?" We are left to imagine the malice and deep humiliation with which Haman carries out the king's command. It is a striking example of that

> "Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
> And falls on the other"—

This is the turning point in Haman's career. The story writer says: "And Mordecai came again to the king's gate, but Haman hasted to his own house mourning and having his head covered." Haman tells his wife and friends what has befallen him, and she gives him cold comfort by predicting that his fall is near. While they are talking the king's chamberlain comes to conduct Haman to that second banquet of which he had boasted so much. He does not go with a joyful step; he is in no mood for feasting now. But his presence at the little banquet is necessary; the play could not go on without him. Doubtless he did not add much to the gayety of the occasion. Queen Esther by means of her glorious beauty, charming manner, and tactful way of treating the king, has completely won him so that he will do anything that she wishes. He asks her what her petition is and declares that he will grant it, even to giving the half of his kingdom. She throws herself at his feet and with all the pent-up anguish of her heart cries out, "My lord, the king, some one has devised my death, and the death of my people; protect me, protect them!" And the king, who has forgotten his careless gift to Haman of the lives of the Jewish people, forgotten the ring, the seal, the decree, answers, "Who has dared to do this?" With flashing eyes she turns to Haman, the court favorite, "This is the man! This wicked Haman is seeking my life and the life of my people!"

It is the crisis in Haman's life. His doom is sealed. The king in great wrath goes out and Haman flings

himself upon the queen's couch to plead for mercy. The king comes back and looking upon him there cries, "What, will he insult the queen in my very presence?" Then one of the courtiers speaks: "Behold also the gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai who had spoken good of the king; it standeth in the house of Haman." "Hang him! hang him on it!" commands the King. Short, sharp, terrible was Haman's fate. He fell like Satan—from heaven to the pit.

But Esther's work is not yet finished. The wicked decree of Haman's making is still in force and according to the laws of the land no order once sent out can ever be recalled; but she induces the king to issue a counter decree authorizing the Jews to defend themselves when attacked under the authority of the first proclamation.

Mordecai is made prime minister in the place of Haman, and so wisely does he manage the affairs of state that the Jews are soon in great favor in the kingdom. Fear falls on the enemies of the Jews because of the power of Mordecai, and when the day set for the slaughter of the Jews comes, those condemned to death defend themselves so vigorously that 75,000 of the Jews' enemies are slain. Then by order of Esther and Mordecai there is established on the anniversary of the day which had been turned from sorrow to gladness, a great feast called Purim, named for Pur, the lot which providentially fixed the day of Haman's intended slaughter at a time when the Jews could provide for their defense. This anniversary is observed with joy and gladness to this day by all Jews throughout the world.

Analysis and Comment

The Book of Esther is in order, the last of the historical books of the Bible. It is here presented as a drama although it does not have the regular dramatic form. It has all the interest of a stirring tragedy and the action proceeds very much as in regular drama. The date of the book is about 470 B. C.

The chief characters are as follows:

Ahasuerus, who is recognized as being the Xerxes of history, who, was vainglorious, cowardly, luxurious pusillanimous, licentious, and bloodthirsty.

Mordecai, a Jew, a man of ability, honesty, uprightness, and courage.

Esther, the beautiful heroine of the play, the cousin and adopted daughter of Mordecai, as lovely in character as she was in person.

Haman, a man of low parentage, a scheming politician, haughty, vindictive, shrewd, and unscrupulous.

Vashti, the queen of whom we know but little except that she showed good sense and modesty in refusing to come into the presence of the drunken revellers.

The story has the five acts found in the classic drama with a brief epilogue:

Act 1. Esther's elevation to the throne (chaps. I-II).

Act 2. Haman's plot and Esther's trouble (III-IV).

Act 3. Esther's courage and Haman's fall (V-VI-VII).

Act. 4. Esther's undoing of Haman's plot and Mordecai's elevation to Haman's place (VIII).

Act. 5. Esther's deliverance of her people and the institution of Purim (IX).

Epilogue: The glory of Ahasuerus and the greatness of Modecai (X).

Act I. *Esther's Elevation to the Throne.*

Scene 1. (I:1-9) The great feast of 180 days. The special feast of seven days. The elaborate preparations. The rule of drinking.

Scene 2. (10-22) The last day of the feast. Vashti called. Her refusal. The king's question. Memucan's suggestion. The deposing of Vashti. The king's decree.

Scene 3. (II:1-18) The advice of the king's servants concerning a new queen. The gathering of the maidens. Esther is among them. She is the most charming of all and is chosen queen. The ceremony of her crowning and her feast.

Scene 4. (21-23) Bigthan and Teresh plot against the

life of the king. Mordecai makes known the plot to Esther and she warns the king. The two plotters are hanged.

Act. II. *Haman's Plot and Esther's Trouble.*

Scene 1. (III:1-6) Promotion of Haman. Decree demanding obeisance to Haman. Mordecai refuses to bow —looks the other way. Mordecai is warned. Haman is informed of Mordecai's refusal to honor him. He plans revenge against the whole Hebrew race.

Scene 2. (8-11) Haman goes before the king and makes his request for the lives of the Jews and promises 10,000 talents for the king's treasury. The king refuses the money, but gives Haman full power. The king's scribes send out the decree "to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish" all the Jews.

Scene 3. (7) The casting of the lots. The lots will not fix a near date. The massacre is put off eleven months.

Scene 4. (IV:1-17) Mordecai puts on sackcloth and ashes and mourns. Esther's message to him. His message in turn. Esther's reply—she is powerless to do anything. Mordecai's persistence—"who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther's courageous resolve.

Act III. *Esther's Courage and Haman's Fall.*

Scene 1. (V:1-5) Esther's dramatic appeal to the king. The king holds out the golden scepter. Esther invites him to a banquet and asks that Haman may come, too.

Scene 2. (6-8) The banquet. Esther pleases the king. He asks her to make known her wish. She defers her plea to the morrow, and invites him and Haman to another banquet.

Scene 3. (9-14) Haman's elation. He passes Mordecai and is filled with wrath. He boasts to his wife and his friends. Shows his anger against Mordecai. His wife suggests a gallows, a request of the king, and the hanging of Mordecai. Haman has the gallows built.

Scene 4. (VI:1-3) The sleepless king. The court rec-

ords are read. The record shows that Mordecai had saved the life of the king against two conspirators. "What honor and dignity hath been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" "There is nothing done for him." The king falls asleep.

Scene 5. (4-10) "Who is in the court?" asks the king awaking. Haman is waiting at the door to make his request for the head of Mordecai. Haman comes in. "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delights to honor?" asks the king of Haman. Haman thinking himself the man, suggests a most signal honor. "Mordecai is the man," cries the king.

Scene 6. (11-14) The procession through the streets. Mordecai returns in humility to his post. Haman goes to his home "mourning and having his head covered." The chamberlain comes to hasten him to the banquet. He is not now so anxious to go.

Scene 7. (VII:1-10) The second banquet. Esther has completely won the king. He is willing to grant any request from her. With dramatic intensity she accuses Haman, the Jew's arch enemy, of plotting the death of her people. The king is enraged against Haman and condemns him to death at once. He is hanged on the gallows prepared for Mordecai.

Act. IV. *Esther's Undoing of Haman's Wrong and Mordecai's Elevation to the Premiership.*

Scene 1. (VIII:1-2) Haman's house given to Esther. Mordecai made prime minister.

Scene 2. (3-17) Esther again a suppliant at the feet of the king. She asks for a reversal of the decree against the Jews. It can not be repealed. But a counter decree is sent out to all the 127 provinces of the kingdom. Mordecai now appears clothed in his gorgeous robes of state "and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad."

Act V. *Esther's Deliverance of Her People and the Institution of Purim.*

Scene 1. (IX:1-11) The thirteenth day of the month of Adar has come. There is bloody strife throughout the

kingdom. Seventy-five thousand of the Jews' enemies are slain; 500 in the palace; and Haman's ten sons.

Scene 2. (12-16) Esther again appears before the king. She asks for a second day of slaughter in Shushan. The plea is granted. On the 14th 300 more people are killed, and the bodies of Haman's ten sons are hanged on the gallows.

Scene 3. (17-32) The Jews name the days of slaughter "Purim" and institute a memorial feast. Esther and Mordecai send orders to all the Jews of the kingdom to observe the days of Purim—the 14th and 15th of the month of Adar.

Epilogue. *The Glory of Ahasuerus and the Greatness of Mordecai.*

King Ahasuerus lays a tribute on the land and on the isles of the sea; and Mordecai is next unto the king and great among the Jews (X:1-3).

Lessons:

1. The presence of an overruling providence: The result of the lots. The reading of the court records. Esther's elevation to the throne.

2. "When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice (VIII:15), but when the wicked beareth rule the people mourn (III:15)."

3. Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.

4. Courage and faithfulness will win. Examples—both Esther and Mordecai.

5. There is a large measure of retribution in this world. The relation and fate of Haman and Mordecai present a good illustration of poetic justice.

6. God cares for his children individually. The name of God is not in the book but his presence is there.

The story of Esther is told with noteworthy art and dramatic power. The characters are well delineated, set forth by action and not by analysis. The plot is cleverly constructed. The introduction, of two chapters, presents the setting and the general situation, and disposes of Vashti and places Esther on the throne. The rising

action or entanglement begins with the embroilment of Mordecai and Haman and by a succession of thrilling incidents is carried to a climax in the sentence of death pronounced against Haman. The events following the climax are important in the story but are on a much lower plane of interest.

The movement of the plot from the issuing of Haman's decree to the climax is skilfully managed. The incidents are all big with importance and some of them thrillingly dramatic. In a spirit of self-sacrifice, Esther ventures her life for her people by intruding into the audience chamber of the king. She requests only that the king and his minister come to a banquet in the queen's apartments. At the banquet Esther so charms the king that she may have her wish for the asking, but she postpones the issue.

The delay gives birth to two important plans, both affecting Mordecai: one by the king to honor him, the other by Haman to hang him. When Haman visits the king early in the morning to ask for the life of Mordecai, he receives an order to confer a signal honor upon him. Thus does the writer indicate the changing fortunes of the two protagonists.

The scene of the second banquet is highly dramatic. Esther pleads for her life, "for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish." "Who is he, and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so?" angrily asks the king. The climax comes in the bitterly accusing words of Esther: "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!" There are few stories with better plots and more thrilling incidents.

CHAPTER X

THE BOOK OF JONAH

Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is come upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us? What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. Then said they unto him, what shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee. So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea; and the sea ceased from her

raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows.

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

. . . . . .

And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. So Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nineveh believed God and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid aside his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God, yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.

Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry? So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city. And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered.

And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said,

it is better for me to die than to live. And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death. Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that can not discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?

Analysis and Comment

Although the book of Jonah is classed among the books of the Minor Prophets, it does not contain prophecies, but is an anonymous narrative. The title does not mean that Jonah is the author but the subject of the book. Its date is about 350 B. C. The Jonah of the book is doubtless Jonah ben Amittai, who prophesied the deliverance of Israel by Jeroboam II. (2 Kings XIV: 23-27).

(1). The call: Jonah receives a call to go to Nineveh to rebuke it for its wickedness. He refuses to go and takes ship at Joppa to flee to Tarshish.

(2). The tempest. The sea rages. The sailors fear for their lives. The gods are angry and must be appeased. Jonah it is who has provoked them to send the storm. He is cast into the sea and there is a great calm.

(3). The deliverance: A great fish swallows Jonah and after three days casts him forth upon the dry land uninjured.

(4). The warning: Jonah goes about the city of Nineveh crying, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The conscience of the people responds to the warning. A fast is proclaimed. The king sits in ashes. The very cattle wear penitential sack cloth. God hears the cry for mercy and saves the city.

(5). Jonah's anger: Jonah is pitiless, nay, very angry. He says that his mission has been a failure. He sits down outside the city to sulk. He is taught the lesson of pity by the incident of the gourd vine. He is asked as to the comparative value of the gourd vine and the six score thousand little ones of Nineveh. There is no answer to the question. If he is not convinced, he is silenced.

The lessons:

(1). Jehovah is the God of the whole world; and Jonah's errand was in the spirit of Christian missions even in those far away days, and in spite of the bitterness of the messenger.

(2). All God's threatenings of penalty are conditional. He is a gracious God, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy.

(3). God's mercy is wider than Israel. "There's a wideness in God's mercy Like the wideness of the sea."

(4). The innocent little ones must not suffer for the sins of those who can discern their right hand from their left.

(5). Love toward God means love toward men.

(6). God's mercy and kindness extend even to our humbler fellow creatures—the dumb brutes.

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small,
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."

Because of the one startling incident the book of Jonah seems to have taken hold of the imagination of the people of both ancient and modern days. The incredulous pagan of the olden time ridiculed the story of Jonah's escape from the sea as does the skeptic of to-day. But the pagan and the skeptic are not the only ones who miss the real meaning of the book; there are many who "pore over the whale and forget God."

There are three views of the book held by those who would interpret it: (1) The whole story is literally true history; (2) It is an imaginative story with definite lessons; (3) The whole story including the incident of the whale is symbolical: Jonah represents rebellious Judah and the whale symbolizes Babylon, the monster that swallowed the people of Judah and later disgorged them and sent them back to Jerusalem.

As a piece of literature this book has a very compact structure. The movement is swift, and there are no digressions except the psalm of the second chapter, and it is thought to be no part of the story in its first form.

The character of Jonah is strongly and clearly drawn as a narrow, bigoted Jew, wayward, wilful, intolerant, and rebellious. The spectacular incidents make a story of adventure as unusual as the spirit and teaching are new and startling. For the spirit of the book is very different from that of Esther; the one shows sympathy for the Gentiles, the other is bitterly hostile towards them; the one is imbued with the old spirit of cruel destructiveness, the other with the new spirit of mercy. Jonah, if he felt as the average Jew of that day, must have been darkly puzzled by the suggestion of special mercy to children; for it was taken for granted in those early days that children must suffer for the sins of their parents. And he must have been struck dumb with amazement when he is told that the lives of the cattle also are to be taken into consideration when the fate of the city is passed upon. There is no other book in the Old Testament that presents such a vision of the divine gentleness.

Professor C. H. Cornill says: "I have read the Book of Jonah at least a hundred times, and I will publicly avow, for I am not ashamed of my weakness that I can not even now take up this marvelous book, nay nor even speak of it, without the tears rising to my eyes, and my heart beating high. This apparently trivial book is one of the deepest and grandest that was ever written, and I should like to say to every one who approaches it, 'Take off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.'"

OLD TESTAMENT POETRY

CHAPTER XI

CHARACTERISTICS OF OLD TESTAMENT POETRY

From the very dawn of history poetry has been indissolubly connected with the highest instincts of the race. It has been made the record of the profoundest convictions of men, of their dearest hopes, their divinest dreams. Men have believed in many ages that the poet is inspired, that he is the speaker of divine oracles. How appropriate, then, that the writers of this great Book should often speak in poetry, that those choice spirits of the human race who have been permitted to climb to the very mountain tops of truth where God's sunlight is not obstructed nor dimmed by the mists and shadows of the earth-valleys, should give that truth to us in the most elevated and inspiring form of speech.

The body of Hebrew poetry found in the Bible has many noble qualities. In the first place it is cosmopolitan in spirit. We know that the Hebrews were exclusive and in many ways narrow. From their customs and many of their beliefs, we should little expect to find in their poetry a sympathy wider than their country, a spirit kinder than their creed; but we do find them. It is said that the poetry of the Bible loses less in translation into other languages than any other body of poetry whatsoever. It is because it deals with things that are universally true, because it reaches those deep things that are in the heart of humanity everywhere.

Again, the Bible poetry is full of imaginative power. The poet here does indeed cast his eye from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth, and body forth forms of things unknown more brilliantly than ever poet did in any other age. He makes the giant hills to skip and clap their hands; he makes Jehovah ride upon the wings

of the wind; causes the earth to tremble at the sound of his voice or the hills to smoke at his touch.

To these qualities may be added the grace of simplicity. The grandest ideas are set forth so simply and plainly that they are brought home to the mind and heart of every reader who wishes to understand. The psalms are suited to men of all capacities and degrees of culture. They are popular and yet elevating, clear and yet profound, easily comprehended and yet inexhaustibly deep.

But perhaps the poetic beauty in which the Bible most excels is in its description of the world around us. Here we find the brightest and most vivacious landscape, the happiest, most joyous view of things. The poet makes the whole realm of nature express his thought and feeling. The whole universe becomes one vast chorus of living things. The Bible landscape needs no dryads to people its woodlands, no oreads to skip over its mountains, no naiads to give mirth to its waters or music to its streams. A higher animation fills them; for every chiming brook and fluttering spray, every thunder-tone and bird-note, every zephyr and every blessed sound is a note in God's anthem.

But the most characteristic feature of Bible poetry is its intense theism. Job, the great epic, presents not to us the deeds of a great hero, but shows us a suffering hero in agony, wondering at and studying out God's way in the world. The lyrics, the odes, the anthems are, with few exceptions, not love songs, not warrior songs, but songs of praise to God, God the Father, God the everlasting King. To the poet Jehovah is the maker and preserver of all things. He shines in the firmament; he rides on the thunderstorm, he clothes the lilies; he feeds the ravens and the young lions, and the cattle on a thousand hills; he gives rain and fruitful seasons; he is the everlasting shield, the comfort and joy of Israel.

The most general law of poetic form is embodied in the principles of rhythm. We of the western countries are accustomed to rhythm which is almost purely syllabic. Of syllabic rhythm there are two sorts, the rhythm

of accent and the rhythm of quantity. The first prevails in the modern tongues, the latter regulates ancient poetry. That is, in English, for example, we measure the rhythm by a regular recurring stress of syllables, as,

"Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes;
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise."

In Latin and Greek poetry rhythm is shown by giving more time to regularly recurring syllables. Innumerable attempts to find in Hebrew poetry one or the other of these forms of rhythm have been unsuccessful. And yet this poetry has a rhythm of its own, the measured rise and fall of feeling and utterance. This sort of rhythm with parallelism of thought and phrase are the plainest characteristics of Hebrew poetry. The ultimate unit consists of two lines or members embodying two answering thoughts. The most common forms of parallelism are, the synonymous, the antithetic, and the synthetic. In the first kind of parallelism the second line enforces the thought of the first by repeating it in a slightly varied form; as,

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon."

In the antithetic form the second line emphasizes the first by presenting a contrasted thought; as,

"A wise son maketh a glad father,
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked shall perish."

In the synthetic form the second line supplements the first by adding a new thought; as,

"Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest thou also be like him.

As a bird that wandereth from her nest,
So is a man that wandereth from his place."

The body of poetry in the Old Testament is considerable. It embraces a great variety of scattered poems and fragments, and five complete books, Job, the Psalms,

Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and the Book of Lamentations.

The scattered poems and fragments are lyric in form and seem to be quotations from older books of lyric poetry. They include such interesting poems as the sword-song of Lamech, the song of the well, Deborah's song, the predictions of Balaam, the blessings of Jacob, the song of Moses at the Red Sea, and the dirge of David over Saul and Jonathan. The oldest specimen of lyric poetry is the song of Lamech to his two wives, found in the fourth chapter of Genesis. It is called the sword-song because it is supposed to celebrate the invention of weapons of iron and brass by Tubal-Cain, the son of Lamech. The song of Moses at the Red Sea, sung in honor of the overthrow of Pharoah's host, is great in its simplicity and sublimity. It has been counted the oldest specimen of the patriotic ode. The elegy of David on the death of Saul and Jonathan, found in the first chapter of Second Samuel is full of strength, pathos, grief, and tenderness.

The greater poems of the Bible named above make a remarkable body of poetry. The Book of Job is the greatest work of Hebrew literature and one of the greatest poems of the world's literature. The Song of Songs is a love song with a wholesome lesson of purity and fidelity. The Psalms are lyrics of devotion, a book of one hundred and fifty hymns divided into five parts or books. Among these psalms are many that will always hold their place among the great poems of the world. There are further studies of these three books in other chapters of this volume.

The Book of Proverbs is a book of maxims and precepts which has no equal anywhere in literature. There are among them maxims which outshine the best ethical precepts of the sages of Greece, or Rome or Egypt or India or China. The Book of Lamentations consists of five poems, each chapter being a complete poem. The first four are in the Hebrew elegiac meter and are alphabetic acrostics. The whole five lament the fall of Jerusalem in varied imagery, most of which is graphic and moving.

David's Lament

David's lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan is a beautiful elegy. The appeal to the imagination is definite, vivid, and clear, and the images are all simple and striking. The feeling expressed is simple, natural, and strong. The poem is a lyric of deep and unaffected grief, a spontaneous outburst from a great heart burdened with sorrow for the loss of a most noble and unselfish friend, and for the death of one who has done the poet grievous wrong, but who is nevertheless the Lord's anointed.

The first stanza of the poem is a cry of grief for the disastrous defeat of the armies of Israel:

> "Thy glory, O Israel,
> Is slain upon thy high places!
> How are the mighty fallen!"

The second stanza expresses shame at the thought that the Philistines may know of the defeat of the Israelites and exult in their humiliation:

> "Tell it not in Gath,
> Publish it not in the streets of Askelon;
> Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
> Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph."

The mountains, after the classic manner, are reproached for their part in the tragedy:

> "Ye mountains of Gilboa,
> Let there be no dew nor rain upon you,
> Neither fields of offerings;
> For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away,
> The shield of Saul as if he had not been anointed with oil."

High praise for the valor and prowess of Saul and Jonathan:

> "From the blood of the slain,
> From the fat of the mighty,
> The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
> And the sword of Saul returned not empty."

The two dauntless warriors had gentle and engaging qualities, and a most intrepid spirit:

"Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions."

A particular eulogy on Saul:

"Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel."

The refrain, expressing the greatness of the calamity:

"How are the mighty fallen
In the midst of the battle!
O Jonathan,
Slain upon thy high places!"

Eulogy on Jonathan with an expression of love and personal loss:

"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women."

The poem closes with the refrain—with a slight variation:

"How are the mighty fallen
And the weapons of war perished!"

The Song of Deborah

The Song of Deborah, of the fifth chapter of Judges, is one of the few relics of the splendid lyric poetry that must have been found in the Book of the Wars of the Lord and the Book of Jasher. There is some confusion of text in the central part of the poem, yet all but a few of the ninety-four lines are coherent, lively, and picturesque.

The story of the decisive victory of the Israelites under Deborah and Barak over the Canaanites under Sisera, is first told in prose in chapter four of the Book of Judges. Sisera had a large army and many chariots. Against the chariots the Israelites could not hope to prevail except by a sudden and unexpected attack. To carry out this plan, Barak secretly assembled his forces

on the heights of Kedesh. But the traitor Heber the Kenite, warned Sisera of Barak's plan of battle, and the Canaanite army was drawn up on the plains of Esdraelon to meet the attack. The Israelites would have been hopelessly defeated except for divine intervention. A great thunderstorm with rain burst upon the plains where Sisera had expected to maneuver his nine hundred chariots, converted it into a mass of mud in which the horses and chariots floundered helplessly. The river Kishon was swollen with the sudden downpour of rain and swept away multitudes of the soldiers of Sisera, while the remainder were put to the sword by the victorious Israelites. Sisera alone escaped from the battlefield and sought refuge in the tent of Heber where he was kindly received by Jael the wife of Heber. She was still loyal to her old friends the Israelites and resolved to do a deed that would offset the treachery of her husband. Accordingly while Sisera slept the sleep of exhaustion, she seized a tent spike and with a hammer drove it through his head. "So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel."

For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
For that the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye Jehovah,
Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto Jehovah,
I will sing praises to Jehovah, the God of Israel.
Lord, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped,
The clouds also dropped water,
The mountains quaked at the presence of the Lord,
Even yon Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,
And the travelers walked through by-ways.
The inhabitants of the villages ceased; they ceased in Israel,
Until that thou Deborah arose, thou arose a mother in Israel.
They chose new gods;
Then was war in the gates:
Was there a shield or spear seen
Among forty thousand in Israel?

My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
That offered themselves willingly among the people.
Bless ye the Lord.
Tell of it, ye that ride on white asses,
Ye that sit upon carpets,
Ye too that but walk by the way.
Far from the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water,
There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord,
Even the righteous acts of his rule in Israel.
Then came down to the gates the people of the Lord.

Awake, awake, Deborah;
Awake, awake, utter a song:
Arise, Barak, and lead away thy captives, thou son of Abinoam.
Then came down a remnant of the nobles and the people,
Jehovah came down for me against the mighty.
Out of Ephraim came down they whose root is in Amalek;
After thee, Benjamin, among thy peoples;
Out of Machir came down governors,
And out of Zebulun they that handle the marshal's staff.
And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah;
As was Issachar so was Barak;
Into the valley they rushed forth at his feet.
By the watercourses of Reuben were there great resolves of heart.
Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds
To hear the pipings of the flock?
At the watercourses of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.
Gilead abode beyond Jordan;
And why did Dan remain in ships?
Asher sat still at the shore of the sea,
And abode by his creeks.
Zebulun were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death.
And Naphtali upon the high places of the field.

The kings came and fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo;
They took no gain of money.
They fought from heaven,
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength!
Then did the horsehoofs stamp,
By reason of the prancings, the prancings of their mighty ones.
Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord,
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;
Because they came not to the help of the Lord,
To the help of the Lord against the mighty.

Blessed above women be Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite,
Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.
He asked water and she gave him milk;
She brought forth butter in a lordly dish.
She put her hand to the nail,
And her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
And with the hammer she smote Sisera,
She smote through his head,
Yea, she pierced and struck through his temples.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
At her feet he bowed, he fell:
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

Through the window she looked forth, and cried,
The mother of Sisera cried through the lattice:
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
Her wise ladies answered her,
Yea, she returned answer to herself,
Have they not found, have they not divided the spoil:
A damsel, two damsels to every man;
To Sisera, a spoil of dyed garments,
A spoil of dyed garments embroidered,
Of dyed garments embroidered on both sides, on the necks of the spoil?
So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:
But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.

It will be observed that the poem is divided into seven paragraphs of twelve, nine, ten, twenty-two, fifteen, thirteen, and thirteen lines respectively. In the introductory paragraph Deborah and Barak give thanks to Jehovah for the patriotic willingness of the people who answered the call to arms, and speak of the miraculous manifestations of the presence of Jehovah as he marches majestically to the assistance of Israel. Paragraph two sets forth the oppressed and helpless condition of Israel before the revolt. The next short paragraph calls upon the princes, the merchants, the travelers, and the women at the wells to tell the story of the zeal of the governors of Israel and to rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord. The fourth paragraph calls upon Deborah to sing of the mustering of the clans. Praise is accorded to those tribes that answered the call and reproaches heaped upon those who through fear or irresolution failed to

come to the defense of the nation. The fifth paragraph tells of the battle, acknowledges the help of Jehovah, and bitterly curses Meroz for its traitorous inactivity because its inhabitants came not "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The next paragraph praises Jael, the wife of Heber, and gives a terribly realistic picture of the killing of Sisera. The last paragraph, saving the last two lines, is doubtless a sort of taunt song; a graphic picture is drawn of Sisera's mother anxiously waiting for the return of her son who she is sure has been victorious. The poet in irony makes her rejoice over his victory and enumerate the spoils and captives that he is bringing back in triumph.

The prose account of the victory of Deborah and Barak over the Canaanites is straightforward and unimpassioned; but the poem presents the same incidents in a way to stir the interest and arouse the feelings of the reader. The prose is transformed into poetry by the use of the usual poetic form, figures, and devices. Of course these devices are used consciously by the writer, but it all seems simple, natural, spontaneous. There is an effective appeal to the imagination and the emotions by striking imagery and the multiplication of concrete details. The most important situations and incidents in the story are elaborated and made more personal and dramatic. The movement of the narrative suggests rapid and energetic action. There is much use of the figure of parallelism, the first paragraph having five parallel couplets. The device of repetition is used with telling effect in the last two paragraphs.

In the prose account bare mention is made of the fact that "the Lord discomfited Sisera," while the poem makes the reader feel that Jehovah is with the hosts of Israel, and that his presence determines the issues of the battle. There is an impressive picture of the march of the great Jehovah to the scene of the battle, making the earth tremble under his footsteps while the heavens rain death upon the presumptuous enemies of his chosen people. The poem has an atmosphere of sustained intensity, and the excited earnestness of the narrator begets a like interest and enthusiasm in the reader. It

has been suggested that the pathetic picture in the last paragraph, of the anxious waiting mother, shows sympathetic sorrow, but the truth is that these lines are spoken in scorn, they make a lively and bitter taunt song.

Seir. Often used to name the whole of Edom. *Edom.* The land southeast of Palestine. *The highways were unoccupied.* The oppression of the Israelites was so bitter and cruel that the people dared not travel the public roads. *Was there a shield or a spear?* For fear that they might raise an insurrection against their conquerors the Israelites had been deprived of all their weapons and were allowed to keep no smith among them. *Ye that ride on white asses.* The princes. *Ye that sit on carpets.* The merchants. *In the places of drawing water.* Where the women would be found. All these shall rehearse the great deeds of the warriors of Israel and speak the praises of Jehovah. *Machir.* A clan of Manasseh. *Taanach, Megiddo.* Two fortified towns on the border of the plains of Esdraelon where the battle was fought. *The stars in their courses fought,* etc. The stars controlled the destinies of the Canaanites and destroyed them by sending the fearful storm of wind and rain. *Meroz.* Supposed to be a village not far from the battlefield.

CHAPTER XII

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

The Hebrew title of the Book of Psalms is a word meaning "praise songs." We get our modern word Psalms from the Greek word *Psalmoi* by which the Hebrew title was translated into the Greek of the Septuagint or Greek version of the Bible.

The Book of Psalms is divided into five separate books; this division is indicated plainly in the Hebrew Bible and in the English Revised Version. The divisions are as follows: Book 1, Psalms 1 to 41; Book 2, 42 to 72; Book 3, 73 to 89; Book 4, 90 to 106; Book 5, 107 to 150. The end of the first four books is marked by a doxology; in the fifth book the place of such a doxology seems to be taken by the whole of Psalm 150. These doxologies are found in the Septuagint translation, which shows that the division of the Psalter into five books was earlier than the second century B. C.

The number of psalms according to the regular Hebrew text is one hundred and fifty, and the Septuagint agrees except that there is inserted the 151st Psalm which is declared to be "outside the number." To this psalm is appended the explanation that it was written by David with his own hand when he fought in single combat with Goliath. Some ancient Jewish authorities reckon the number of psalms to be 149, others 147. The Jewish Talmud says that the number is 147, "according to the years of our father Jacob." There is a difference between the Hebrew and the Septuagint texts in the numbering of the psalms, though the totals are the same. Taking the Hebrew text as the standard, the Septuagint makes one psalm out of IX and X, also of CXIV and CXV, and divides CXVI and CXVII into two each. The Vulgate and the older English versions follow the

Septuagint numbering, but the later English versions follow the Hebrew. Thus while the total number and the order are the same, the number of any particular psalm in the Septuagint version is one behind that of the Hebrew version in most parts of the Psalter. For example, David's Shepherd Psalm is number 23 in the Hebrew and 22 in the Septuagint version.

The Hebrew Psalter was formed by a gradual growth. It appears that even the individual psalms gradually grew from a few lines to the length of stately songs. There is plain evidence that there existed originally a number of smaller collections of psalms, and that these were brought together in the five books which make up the Psalter. It was probably a process like the accumulation of the individual songs into the different parts of the modern Gospel Hymns, first number one, then number two, and so on to number five; and then a combination of the five parts into one volume. The titles of the psalms indicate that those of them attributed to the same author were placed consecutively in the larger collections. For example, book three consists of two minor collections, one attributed to Asaph and the other to the sons of Korah; and book five consists of a group of pilgrim songs and a group of hallelujah songs, each apparently at one time a distinct song book.

To most of the individual psalms are prefixed titles or inscriptions designating their poetical, musical, or liturgical character, their authorship or origin, or the historical occasion for which they were written or which they illustrate. One title may include two or more of these matters. The greatest scholars and most persevering translators have been puzzled by the titles relating to the poetical, musical, and liturgical character of the psalms. The inscriptions referring to historical events are said to be inappropriate in many instances, and those referring to authorship are not always counted trustworthy. Evidently many of these titles and inscriptions are no essential part of the psalms.

Tradition says that David wrote seventy-four out of the one hundred and fifty psalms of the Psalter. An interesting study might be made of those psalms which,

in the Authorized Version, are assigned by introductory inscriptions, to certain experiences of David or to particular periods of his life. It seems clear that Psalms 8, 19, 23, and 29 reflect the thoughts, emotions, and aspirations of his early years. In Psalm 8 he humbles himself before the great Creator when he thinks how he has been exalted by being made the humble helper of the great Saul with his harp and his sling. In Psalm 23 his shepherd life furnishes the symbolism for the expression of his understanding of the kindness and gentleness of God. The eloquent orbs and spaces above him, as he lies with his sheep, show to him the greatness of God, and he, with a poet's inspiration, proclaims it to the world in Psalm 19. Psalm 29 is a vivid picture of one of the many storms David must have looked upon from his sheltered retreat among the mountains. Psalm 59 is doubtless his prayer for deliverance as Saul's men have surrounded him and are eager for his blood; and Psalm 56, his cry for divine help when as a fugitive from Israel, his life is threatened at the Philistine court of King Achish. In Psalm 52 he upbraids Doeg for causing the death of those who befriended him, and predicts the utter destruction of this cruel, mischief-making Edomite. Psalm 57 is a cave song, or a hymn from the stronghold of Adullum where David's enemies roar about him like fierce lions; and Psalm 54 is a cry to Jehovah for help when the people of Ziph were planning to betray him into the hands of his enemy Saul.

All the psalms here referred to belong to the youth of David and to the strenuous years when he was a fugitive with a price set on his head. Two songs, Psalms 24 and 68, clearly belong to the prosperous period of David's life, to the ceremonies of the greatest event of his history—the placing of the sacred ark on Mount Moriah. The first was sung as the procession of priests and people marched up to the gates of the sacred enclosure and demanded that they be opened in the name of the Lord of Hosts. The second presents, obscurely, however, the whole checkered career of Israel as the nation has fought with its enemies under the

guidance and protection of Jehovah. It is plainly a processional hymn used in the ceremonies of this great celebration.

Studies of Individual Psalms

To illustrate a method which may be used in the mastery of the individual psalms, there are here presented interpretations of the first, twenty-fourth, nineteenth, and twenty-ninth Psalms, all poems of different types.

PSALM I

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers:
But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
And on his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also doth not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
The wicked are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous;
But the way of the wicked shall perish.

This psalm is introductory to the Book of Psalms. It is a development in poetical language and imagery of the thought repeated many times in the Book of Proverbs, that it is well with the righteous and ill with the wicked. It proclaims the superiority of the man occupied in meditating upon the divine law, to the worldly man who is without seriousness, stability, accomplishment, or security for the future. A suggestive title might be "The Tree and the Chaff."

Development of the theme: The first stanza of five lines contrasts the man of pious meditation to three grades of bad men:

1. The one who *walketh* in the counsel of the wicked.
2. The one who *standeth* in the way of sinners.
3. The one who *sitteth* in the seat of the scoffers.

Note the three-fold parallelism—walk, stand, sit; counsel, way, session; wicked, sinners, scoffers. Three successive steps in a career of evil are presented: adoption of principles; persistence in practices; and deliberate association with those who are notorious offenders.

In the second stanza of six lines the tree rooted, vigorous, and luxuriant with green leaves, and full of fruit, is contrasted to the light and unstable chaff driven before the wind. These well symbolize the two contrasted lives.

The conclusion: This is presented in the four lines of stanza three. The wicked can not stand when his life is given its true value nor can sinners remain with the righteous. The judgment referred to is not that of the last day, but the estimate formed of a man from his acts from day to day. The meaning of the word *knoweth* includes the ideas of approval, care, and guidance by the Lord.

Among the parallelisms are lines four and five (synnoymous); lines six and seven (synthetic); lines fourteen and fifteen (antithetic). The figures of speech are metaphors and similes. They are numerous, apt, and vivid. The appeal to the imagination is clear and definite.

PSALM XXIV

This psalm was used on the occasion of the bringing of the sacred ark to Jerusalem. Let us imagine that the great procession is forming at the foot of the hill ready to march up carrying the ark to the temporary structure prepared to receive it. The procession of priests and trumpeters is leading the way and the whole company sings:

> "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
> The world and they that dwell therein;
> For he hath founded it upon the seas,
> And established it upon the floods."

Then there is a solo by a priest:

> "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
> And who shall stand in his holy place?"

Response by another priest:

"He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of our salvation."

Then a chorus by the whole company as they march up the hill:

"This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, even Jacob."

The procession is halted at the gates of the enclosure and a summons is given to open the gates. Certain words of challenge and response have been agreed upon and the gates will not open until the proper response has been given. The leaders of the procession sing their demands:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in."

Then comes the challenge from within:

"Who is this King of glory?"

Response from without:

"The Lord, strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle."

This is not the correct response and the gates are not opened, so the worshipers must repeat their summons:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors,
And the King of glory shall come in."

Challenge from within:

"Who is this King of glory?"

Joint chorus from without, in which at last the great name is spoken:

"The Lord of Hosts,
He is the King of glory!"

At these words the gates open and the further ceremonies of the inauguration are carried out.

PSALM XIX

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language;
Their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,
Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
And rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course.

His going forth is from the end of the heavens,
And his circuit unto the ends of it;
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul:
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever:
The ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honey-comb.
Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
In keeping them there is great reward.

Who can discern his errors?
Clear thou me from hidden faults.
Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins;
Let them not have dominion over me:
Then shall I be upright,
And I shall be clear from great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord, my rock, and my redeemer.

The title of this psalm might be "God's law in Nature and in the Human Heart." It is sometimes called "The Psalm of the Sun," because the sun is the chief witness in the testimony given of the glory of the Creator.

The theme of the first part is: The testimony of the heavens to the power, majesty, and greatness of the Creator; of the second part, The beauty and power of the moral law.

Line of thought. The thought of the first part is that the heavens bear eloquent and unceasing witness to God's glory. This statement is made in the first line and repeated and elaborated beautifully and poetically in the remaining thirteen lines. The heavens, the firmament, the phenomena of day and night, the great sun, all are witnesses of God's glory and publish it abroad.

In the second part of the poem the law of God in the human heart is given different designations—law, testimony, precepts, commandment, fear of the Lord, ordinances—and the characteristics, power, and influence of each are set forth. Then the Psalmist, thinking of the great difficulty a man has in understanding and conforming his life to the law, so straight and exacting, prays for divine help that he may be obedient, pure, clean, and acceptable.

Form. There are two distinct divisions of the poem as has already been explained. Some readers have thought that these parts are the work of two authors; but it is more reasonable to suppose that the contrast of the two divisions is a part of the plan of the poem. The setting of these parts off against one another is very effective and there is certainly a kind of unity in the plan. The poem is made beautiful, musical, and eloquent by the most skillful use of parallelism. There are many figures of speech and the appeal to the imagination is vivid and strong.

Explanation of words and phrases. The heavens, the space in which the heavenly bodies are placed. *The glory of God,* the visible manifestation of his presence; the heavens in their vastness, splendor, order, and mystery are peculiarly suited to show forth God's glory. *The firmament,* the vault of heaven. *Day unto day uttereth speech,* each day, each night, pours out its message to its successor in an unbroken tradition. *There is no speech nor language,* their message is inarticulate. *Their voice is not heard,* there is a silent eloquence reach-

ing from one end of the world to the other. Addison has beautifully paraphrased this line:

> "What though in solemn silence all
> Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
> What though nor real voice nor sound
> Amid their radiant orbs is found?
> In reason's ear they all rejoice
> And utter forth a glorious voice,
> Forever singing as they shine,
> 'The hand that made us is divine.'"

Their line is gone out, the word line means measuring line. This line has measured the whole earth as the territory in which the heavens may proclaim their message. *In them hath he set a tabernacle.* the sun is the chief witness. He is a king with his pavilion, his tabernacle, in the heavens, and marches across the heavens like a conquering hero. He is splendid in his attire and has the freshness of youthful vigor and happiness. *The law of the Lord,* instruction, doctrine, teaching. *Perfect,* complete, a guide which can not mislead or fail. *Restoring,* refreshing, invigorating. *Testimony,* the law as bearing on God's will and man's duty. *Sure,* not variable or uncertain. *Simple,* the open-minded man. *Commandment,* a special injunction in which man's obligations are set forth. It is straight and gives moral satisfaction. *Pure,* a term applied to the sun, light-giving, giving light to the one who hears and obeys. *Fear of the Lord,* another synonym for law. It is clean in contrast to the immoralities of the heathen. *Enduring forever,* righteousness is immortal. *Ordinances,* statutes, laws. They are in accord with absolute justice. *Presumptuous sins,* sins committed in a spirit of proud defiance.

PSALM XXIX

This poem may have for its title "The Tempest," or "The Voice of Jehovah in the Tempest." There is no phenomenon in nature so awful as a thunderstorm, and almost every poet from Homer and Virgil down to the present day has tried to describe it. This psalm is a description of such a tempest. It is well known that

storms in Palestine are far more sudden, violent, and impressive than in western countries. The Hebrews believed that thunder was the voice of Jehovah. And so the theme of this poem is that the Lord is present in the destructive thunderstorm and will protect his people from the power of the tempest.

Form. The first two verses are an introduction to the poem and call upon the mighty ones to praise Jehovah because of the power and majesty he shows in the guidance of the storm and because of the protection he gives to his people. The remainder of the poem is devoted to an account of the geographical progress of the storm. There are no figures of speech except metaphors and parallelisms.

Line of thought. Let us imagine the spectator-psalmist standing with the awe-struck multitude in the Temple porch at Jerusalem, where they have been driven for refuge from the coming storm, and watching the march of the thunderstorm as it rises out of the Mediterranean, the "mighty sea," and sweeps eastward, strikes the cedars on the mountains, breaks them, and causes the mountains to quake. They see the storm continue its way across the plains, frightening the wild animals, and amid flashes of lightning burst in a water flood upon the Temple. There are touches of terror in the description of the geographical progress of the tornado, and it derives a sacred power from the presence of Jehovah in each successive peal of thunder.

The storm arises out of the sea and the poet cries:

"The voice of the Lord is on the sea;
The God of glory thundereth;
The Lord is on the mighty sea!
The voice of the Lord is powerful,
The voice of the Lord is full of majesty!"

Now the tempest has swept from the sea and struck Lebanon with majestic power and a mighty roar. The people look toward Lebanon and the poet again speaks:

"The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars;
Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon;
He maketh them to skip like a calf,
Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn."

Then with flashes of lightning and peals of thunder the tornado sweeps across the plain toward the Temple, and the poet cries:

"The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire,
The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness,
The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve
And discovereth the forests:
And in his Temple doth every one speak of his glory!"

—For there has gone up from the multitude in the Temple porch a shout of praise and admiration for the power and magnificence of this great manifestation of the mighty Jehovah.

Now the fury of the storm is spent and showers of water begin to fall, and the poet cries again:

"The Lord sitteth upon the water torrent!"

Then thinking of the majesty of the storm, of the powerful King who commands the tempests, and of their safety in the midst of this spectacular display of destructive forces, he cries out:

"Yea, the Lord sitteth king forever,
The Lord will give strength unto his people!"

—Here the sun breaks forth in magnificent glory and the poet utters the closing line:

"The Lord will bless his people with peace."

Explanation of words and phrases. *O ye mighty,* sons of the mighty, or sons of God, or sons of the gods. *In the beauty of holiness,* in holy array. *Sirion,* Mount Hermon. *Divideth the flames of fire,* display of forked lightning. *Maketh the hinds to calve,* prematurely, through fear. *Discovereth the forests,* uncovereth or maketh visible, or as in Revised Version, strippeth the forests bare.

CHAPTER XIII

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JOB

The author of the Book of Job is unknown. The date of its composition is supposed to be between the time of King Solomon and of the Exile, about 600 B.C. In form it is a dramatic poem framed in an epic setting. The prologue, the epilogue, and the explanatory introduction to Elihu's speech are prose, the remainder of the book is poetry. There is plainly a unity pervading the book, though many scholars declare that it is a composite work and has been supplemented by successive additions.

The Book of Job ranks with the great poems of literature. Indeed there are many readers who regard it as the greatest masterpiece of all literature. It has been well classed with the three greatest dramas of the world, the Prometheus Bound of Æschylus, Shakespeare's Hamlet, and Goethe's Faust. In spiritual insight, in strength, in a certain audacity of courage in dealing with truth, the author of Job may be said to surpass even Æschylus, or Goethe, or Shakespeare.

Carlyle says of this book, "I call the Book of Job, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels indeed as if it were not Hebrew, such a noble universality, different from patriotism and sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book; all men's book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem—man's destiny and God's way with him here in the earth. And all in such free flowing outlines, grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody, and repose of reconcilement. Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation, oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind. There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit."

Job has been called the problem drama. According to Professor Conant's view, the subject of the book is "The mystery of God's providential government of men." Professor Delitzsch declares that the problem is, "Why does suffering on suffering befall the righteous?" Professor Genung in his most excellent study of Job, "The Epic of The Inner Life," argues that the chief problem is not the mystery of suffering in the world, but is expressed in Satan's sneering words, "Does Job serve God for naught?" There is no doubt that the book discusses all these problems. Indeed it would be difficult to state the problem or the teaching of the book in one abstract proposition. It is a true picture of real life, and in such a picture good and evil, and wisdom and error, are too much interwoven to say that they are all working to a certain well-defined pattern. Characters of the Drama:

Jehovah. He has a majestic part; is fittingly introduced in a thunder storm; his words are full of power and sublimity; he is kind, just, and forgiving; gives even the devil his due.

Satan. Not a very powerful or bad character; a sort of prosecuting attorney for the world.

Job. A wealthy sheik; the hero of the drama; of magnificent courage, humble patience, strong faith, and Promethean independence.

Eliphaz. Prince and scholar of Teman; the oldest and wisest of the three friends; a dignified and noble character; is firm in his opinion; of plain, common sense; a seer of visions and a dreamer of dreams; a venerable theologian.

Bildad. Prince of Shuah; a sage and a treasure house of the wisdom of the ancients; his philosophy not broad, but clear and definite; his fundamental creed—God's justice; a traditionalist.

Zophar. Prince and scholar of Naamah; is dogmatic and bigoted; commonplace, sharp, and bitter; prides himself on being "a plain, blunt man."

Elihu. A young prince and scholar of Buz; of the family of Ram. Is egotistic, though he dwells on his modesty; shows the confidence of youth; seems to think

himself the vehicle of absolute truth; but makes a strong and eloquent plea. This is a clever bit of characterization.

Job's Wife. She appears but once; can not understand Job's attitude; has been too much maligned by the commentators.

Four Messengers. Field hand, shepherd, drover, household servant.

Sons of God. Angels, or possibly human worshipers.

Job's brethren, sisters, acquaintances, and a miscellaneous company of people from the village.

Divisions of the Drama:

There are five definite divisions of the book: The Prologue, the Debate, Interposition of Elihu, the Voice out of the Whirlwind, and the Epilogue.

The Prologue. This presents the preliminary story, introduces the chief characters and lays the basis for the rest of the drama. This is written in prose except a few lines in which the messengers dramatically make their reports.

The Debate. Job driven from the city on account of his loathsome disease, sits on the ash-mound at the city gate seven days in silence; then he begins his complaint and is answered by his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. The debate continues through three cycles of speeches, the friends speaking to Job in turn and Job answering each one.

The Speech of Elihu. A young man, Elihu, has listened impatiently to the efforts of the three friends to refute Job's arguments and as soon as he has the opportunity he takes the place of the friends and tries to convince Job of the error of his opinions and ways.

The Voice of Jehovah. A great storm arises, and out of the whirlwind the voice of Jehovah speaks to Job to reprimand him for his impatience, and bitterness, and presumption, and to convince him that he little understands the ways of Jehovah in the world. Job repents of his rebellious spirit and speeches and submits himself to Jehovah.

The Epilogue. In the prose conclusion of the book Job is vindicated and restored to his former glory and great-

ness and the three friends are condemned for their false speaking.

THE PROLOGUE

The Prologue presents a series of five scenes changing from earth to heaven and back again, the time being several weeks or months. The first scene opens with Job at his home devout, prosperous, peaceful, happy, the greatest of all the men of the East. The second scene takes place in heaven where the sons of God come to present themselves before Jehovah. Satan appears in the company and Jehovah asks him if he has observed the perfect and upright character of his servant Job. Satan's reply is a charge that Job's righteousness is mercenary and not disinterested. So Job is given into the hands of Satan to be tested. The third scene presents Job at his home in Uz where in a most dramatic way four breathless messengers in quick succession announce to him the loss of all his flocks and herds, and of the tragic death of his seven sons and three daughters. Job is crushed by the calamity but utters no word of complaint against Jehovah. The fourth scene is the second council in heaven at which Satan reports his failure and declares that if Job is touched with physical affliction he will curse Jehovah to his face. So Job is further given into the power of Satan except that his life must be spared. In the fifth scene Job sits upon an ash heap at the gate of his village, an outcast afflicted with a painful and loathsome disease. He does not curse Jehovah but is grievously bewildered and perplexed.

THE DEBATE

Here the drama begins. The ash-mound is the stage, with all surrounding nature for scenery; round about stand a chorus of silent spectators, gazing on the great man now fallen so low; travelers stop and wonder at the sight. His wife loses her faith and bids him renounce Jehovah, who treats him thus, and die. His three friends in pomp of woe are there; they have ascended the mound and are sitting near their afflicted comrade. All wait for the suffering hero to break the silence.

It is taken for granted by all, Job, his wife, and his friends, that he is, for some reason, the object of God's wrath. The disease with which he is afflicted, elephantiasis, was regarded as the dread sign of a visitation from God. This, then, is Job's difficulty: God is punishing him—and for what he does not know. He knows that he has not sinned. He is conscious of the strictest integrity. It is strange that he should be punished without knowing what his crime is. This distresses him, but his distress is greater when he feels that he is shut off from the friendship of God, and greater yet when he thinks that if a righteous man is punished just as if he were a wicked man, then the world is out of joint, and right and wrong, justice and injustice are all confused in the world. It is this that perplexes his spirit; and time and again when his friends try to convince him of the truth of their theory which declares suffering always to be the result of sin, and prosperity, the reward of righteousness, he is sorely tried, for he knows that there is a conflict between this theory and his own consciousness. And so the debate and struggle go on. Seven days and seven nights have Job's friends sat in silence when Job utters the curse with which the debate opens. It is not a curse against God but rather an appeal to God in a heart-rending lamentation and a bitter complaint that he must live and suffer.

Let the day perish wherein I was born;
And the night which said, There is a man child conceived!
Let that day be darkness;
Let not God regard it from above,
Neither let the light shine upon it,
Let darkness and the shadow of death claim it for their own;
Let a cloud dwell upon it;
Let all that maketh black the day terrify it.
Wherefore is light given to him, that is in misery,
And life unto the bitter in soul?

This complaint is the outpouring of an over-burdened soul who can not see why a life so bitter and hard should be given at all. Thinking, of course, that his friends will understand him and sympathize with him, he thus pours out his heart in bitter anguish. But when he pauses he is surprised that he does not receive any words

of sympathy from his friends and soon learns that they are shocked at his blasphemy in not submitting to this stroke of misfortune without making any protest. So they determine to set him right and the debate begins. Eliphaz gently and kindly rebukes him and gives him the consolation of a theology which declares that adversity is always divine punishment. He begins with an apology,

> "If one essay a word with thee, wilt thou be offended,
> Yet who can forbear speaking?"

Then follows the best, the most elaborate of all the speeches made by the three friends. It anticipates the argument of Bildad and Zophar and partly that of Elihu. Eliphaz asks Job why he, who has comforted so many, should now fall into despair when affliction comes nigh him. He declares that in the world everything comes by justice and desert. When we see a man suffering we know that he has sinned and we can measure the enormity of his transgression by the intensity of his suffering. He affirms that it is wickedly presumptuous for a man to pass judgment on the acts of Jehovah. He knows that he is right in this position because the truth of it was revealed to him in a vision. In the night a shadowy form passed before his frightened eyes and a voice was heard saying,

> "Shall mortal man be just before God?
> Shall a man be pure before his Maker?"

So no man can be right in complaining of God's mismanagement of the world. Job should be glad that God is testing him; this chastening is for his good: God smites only to heal. The purpose is to lead him into a broader, richer life where he shall be in league with nature and every creature. The exhortation concludes:

> "Then shalt thou come to thy grave in full age,
> Like as a shock of corn cometh in its season.
> Lo this! We have searched it, it is so;
> Hear it and know it for thy good."

It is a mortifying surprise to Job that his friends do not accept his new point of view and he defends himself vigorously against the remonstrances of Eliphaz, laments

the attitude of his friends, and charges them with being fickle and unfeeling.

Then Job turns from his friends and addresses the Almighty, pleads with him, rehearses his miseries, and pathetically declares that his suffering is too great for such an insignificant being:

"What is man that thou shouldst magnify him,
That thou shouldst visit him every morning,
And try him every moment?
If I have sinned what can I do unto thee,
O thou watcher of men?
Why hast thou set me as a mark for thee,
So that I am a burden to myself?"

Bildad is incensed that Job should seek to maintain his righteousness in the face of what to him is overwhelming proof of Job's sin. He emphasizes the perfect justice that orders all things:

"Will God pervert the right?
Or will the Almighty pervert justice?
If thy children have sinned against him,
So hath he given them over into the hands of their transgressions."

Job's bitter complaint is that there is no right standard of justice in the world; the wicked rule and the judges are blind. He cries out

"The earth is given into the hands of the wicked:
He covereth the faces of the judges thereof.
If it be not he, who then is it?"

Bildad affirms that God is just, always just, therefore when there is punishment sent, it inevitably argues a sin committed. Job protests against this with terrible energy. Then he complains that God hides his face from him. And since God is thus hidden, he longs for a mediator, an interpreter, a daysman,

"Who might lay his hand on both of us;
Let him remove his rod from me,
That the dread of him should not unman me."

As the debate goes on the friends grow more provoking and Job sometimes loses his patience and speaks in bitter sarcasm:

"No doubt but ye are the people,
And wisdom shall die with you.
But I have understanding as well as you;
I am not inferior to you;
Yea, who knoweth not such things as these?
I am as one that is a laughing stock to his neighbor,
A man that called upon God, and he answered him,
The just, the perfect man, is made a laughing-stock."

He longs in his darkness for the light which the Gospel afterwards brought to the world. If he could only be sure that there is a life beyond the grave where justice would be rendered,—but he is not very hopeful,—and, for the time he pushes the thought aside.

Zophar affirms that the joy of the ungodly is only for a moment:

"Knowest thou not this of old time,
Since man was placed upon earth,
That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
And the joy of the godless but for a moment,
Though his excellency mount up to the heavens,
And his head reach unto the clouds;
Yet he shall perish forever like his own dung:
They which have seen him shall say, Where is he?
He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found:
Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night."

But Zophar is not really describing what is but what he thinks ought to be. Job replies that this is not a true picture of life and he depicts life as he finds it in the world:

"Wherefore do the wicked live,
Become old, yea, wax mighty in power?
Their seed is established with them in their sight,
And their offspring before their eyes.
Their houses are safe from fear,
Neither is the rod of God upon them.
They send forth their little ones like a flock,
And their children dance, they sing to the timbrel and harp,
And rejoice at the sound of the pipe.
They spend their days in prosperity,
And in a moment they go down to Sheol.
Yet they said unto God, Depart from us,
For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.
What is the Almighty that he should serve him?
And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?"

Once more his friends tell him that he must have sinned against God. They grapple more closely with him; they accuse him directly now. Job has been getting the better of the argument apparently and in order to save his theology Eliphaz is determined that Job shall be wicked, whatever happens to the facts. After accusing him of having stripped the poor of their clothing, withholden bread from the hungry, broken the arms of the fatherless, and sent widows away empty, he counsels him to reconcile himself with God and be at peace. Pathetic indeed is Job's reply here to the heartless comfortings of his friends:

"O that I knew where I might find him,
That I might come even to his seat!
I would order my cause before him,
And fill my mouth with arguments,
I would know the words which he would answer me,
And understand what he would say unto me.
Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?
Nay, he would give heed unto me;
There the upright might reason with him;
So should I be delivered forever from my judge.
Behold I go forward,
But he is not there;
And backward,
But I can not perceive him;
On the left hand, where he doth work,
But I can not behold him;
He hideth himself on the right hand,
That I can not see him.
But he knoweth the way that I take;
When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.
My foot hath held fast to his steps;
His way have I kept, and turned not aside.
I have not gone back from the commandment of his lips;
I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

Job closes the debate by uttering the "oath of clearing" in which he protests that he is innocent of the charges which the friends have brought against him. He clears himself of all secret sensual desires and practices; repudiates the charge that he has abused his power or has been indifferent to the sufferings of others; clears himself of any secret dishonorable feelings against God or man; then fixes his signature to these earnest protestations.

THE INTERPOSITION OF ELIHU

Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu when he saw that Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had no answer for Job. After some preliminary parleying about his youth and modesty and ability to refute Job, he begins his argument. He declares that Job's charge that God shows arbitrary hostility to him is unfounded. He declares that God never refuses to hear an appeal; that he speaks to man in many ways, through dreams and visions, and through chastenings; that in the midst of these chastenings he sends his angel messengers who appeal to the sufferer to return to the path of rectitude and prosperity. He declares, also, that God arranges the order of the world himself and has, therefore, no motive for injustice; being higher than the law, whatever God does must be lawful, just, and right. He says further that Job's declaration that man is not profited by righteousness is not true; that man's conduct affects himself alone; that God is too exalted to be affected by human conduct. He closes by presenting a picture of the greatness and unsearchableness of God in nature, and appeals to Job to consider these wonderful things.

THE DIVINE INTERVENTION

During the last part of Elihu's speech a storm has been gathering and now a voice comes out of the whirlwind. The theme of this address is, Shall mortal man contend with God? This thirty-eighth chapter is one of the sublimest passages in the world's literature. The lines are unapproachable as descriptions of the wonders of creation and the greatness of the Creator and are made splendid by choice diction, startling imagery, and picturesque illustrations. The address begins:

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?
Gird up now thy loins like a man;
For I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.
Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare, if thou hast understanding.
Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?
Or who hath stretched the line upon it?
Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened?

Or who laid the corner-stone thereof,
When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth,
As if it had issued out of the womb?
When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddling band for it,
And brake up for it my decreed place,
And set bars and doors,
And said, Hitherto shalt thou come but no further:
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

In this address out of the whirlwind there is first a setting forth of the most striking features and phenomena of the physical world and of the mysteries of creation: The wonders of the earth and the heavens, and the marvels of God's animal creation: the lion and the raven, the goats and the hinds, the wild ass, the wild ox, the ostrich, the war horse, the eagle, and the hawk. Each one is wonderful and mysterious. Could Job contend with God in such creative power? Then since Job questions the principles of God's rule, he is ironically invited to govern the world himself. He is told that it will require omnipotence:

"Hast thou an arm like God
And canst thou thunder with a voice like him?"

Besides, there are two monsters, the Behemoth and the Leviathan; Job must try his hand at conquering them. There is here a most lively and picturesque account of these giant monsters. After he has seen this dazzling panorama of the great and powerful phenomena of Jehovah's marvelous universe, Job stands abashed. He cries out:

"I know that thou canst do all things
And that no purpose of thine can be restrained.
I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;
But now mine eyes seeth thee;
Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

We are not to understand that Job really repents. He has nothing to repent of. Let his sufferings be presented to him as a mystery, he can submit and trust; but if they are charged to him as punishment for sin, he revolts against the injustice.

THE EPILOGUE

Job having humbled himself before God, is restored to a prosperity twofold that which he enjoyed before. He is commanded to intercede for his three friends lest punishment for their folly be visited upon them, because they spoke not that which was right concerning Jehovah. In Job's prosperity his friends who had stood aloof, come back to him to comfort him and to greet him with gifts of gold. But his blessings do not end with the restoration of his property and his friends. His home is made happy by the return of his children, seven stalwart sons and three fair daughters. In all the land no women were found so fair as the daughters of Job. So worthy were they that he disregards the Hebrew practice and gives them an inheritance, even though he has seven sons. With his children of three generations about him he lives in happiness for one hundred and forty years, and dies, being old and full of days.

The Problem of the Book and the Solutions Offered.

The real problem of the Book of Job is, Why must the righteous man endure suffering? Four answers are given. The Prologue seems to indicate that suffering is the test of goodness. Satan sneeringly declares that Job is righteous because it is easy for him to be so in the midst of presperity; and Jehovah permits a test to be made to determine whether Job's piety is of the commercial sort or of the disinterested kind. Suffering is the means by which this question is to be determined.

The second solution is presented by the three friends in the extended debate. Their thesis is that suffering is a punishment for sin; that the very character and righteousness of God are involved in the thesis.

The new factor which Elihu adds to the discussion is that suffering is one of the voices by which God warns men against their sins and seeks to restore them to righteous living.

The solution offered by the Voice out of the Whirlwind

is that the whole Universe is an unfathomed and unfathomable mystery. The good is as mysterious as the evil. The greatness and grandeur of the Universe with its secret and uncontrollable forces should teach man that there are problems which he can not solve, questions which must remain unanswered. The proper attitude for one to take in the presence of such mystery is one of humility and trustfulness. The Voice teaches this and does, in fact, induce in Job such a state of mind.

Another teaching of the book is that a man should stand for his honest convictions at all hazards; that he should go wherever his search for truth leads him. The unyielding integrity of Job that could even reproach God when his rule in the world seemed unjust, was more acceptable than the servile adoration of the three friends who sought to twist the truth in order to justify God.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SONG OF SONGS

There has always been much difference of opinion as to the proper interpretation of The Song of Songs, among both Jewish and Christian scholars. The subject is evidently love, but the manner of dealing with the subject is obscure. It seems evident, too, that the poem is in the form of dialogue, but who the speakers are and how the lines are distributed among them has always been a matter of controversy. An interpretation that has been given prominence in late years by the German scholar, Budde, is that the book is not a drama at all but consists of a series of lyric idyls or marriage songs. This critic explains that even to-day there is a Syrian custom of celebrating weddings by such ceremonies as are presented in this poem. The celebration lasts seven days, which are called "The King's Week," because the young groom and his bride seated on a kind of throne erected for them on a threshing floor, as a place of honor, play the parts of king and queen and receive the homage of a large company of their relatives and friends. The ceremonies consist partly of marriage songs accompanied by dances, participated in by the wedding attendants, a chorus of men and women, and the young pair themselves.

While it may be that these customs explain the song, while it is possible thus to divide it into dramatic lyrics and regard them as a suite of wedding songs, it is possible, also, and more interesting to look upon it as a drama. It is so considered in the following study. There are two views of the poem as a drama. According to one of these, the traditional view, there are but two main characters by whom the dialogue is sustained, King Solomon and a Shulamite maiden of whom he is enamored. According to the other view, there are three principal

characters, King Solomon, the Shulamite maiden, and her shepherd lover. The second view is more pleasing and gives a more satisfactory meaning to the poem.

Brief Synopsis of the Story: A beautiful Shulamite maiden, surprised by the king and his train on a royal progress in the north of Palestine, has been taken to the camp and afterwards brought to the king's palace in Jerusalem. The king hopes to persuade her to exchange her rustic home in the north for the honor and enjoyments which a court life could afford. She has, however, already pledged her heart to a young shepherd, and the admiration and blandishments which the king lavishes upon her are powerless to make her forget her lover. All the promised luxury and honors can not induce her to prove unfaithful to her vows to the humble shepherd lover. In the end she is allowed to return to her mountain home, where at the close of the poem, the lovers appear hand in hand, and express in warm and glowing words the superiority of genuine, spontaneous, innocent affection over that which may be purchased by wealth or rank.

Interpretation of the Poem.

The drama opens in north Palestine. Solomon and his court have come up from Jerusalem and are encamped among the hills of Galilee. The officers of the king have come upon a beautiful, sunburnt peasant girl who is in charge of a vineyard. They are struck with her beauty and are sure that Solomon would be pleased to add her to his harem. We learn afterwards that she has had a hard time at her home; she is apparently living with her stepmother and her stepbrothers are harsh in their treatment of her. We learn that she has become betrothed to a peasant in the vicinity and looks upon her betrothal as sacred and binding. So her faithfulness is in no wise disturbed by the proffered honor of entering the king's harem, an honor that was gladly accepted by Bathsheba and Esther.

In the first scene the Shulamite is presented in a mood of loneliness longing for the caresses of her absent lover

and complaining that she is detained at the royal encampment against her will. She inquires eagerly where her lover may be found, and the court ladies reply ironically that she should go forth and feed her kids by the shepherds' tents (verse 8). In the next scene Solomon seeks to win the love of the maiden but she parries his compliments by speaking of her shepherd lover and by giving reminiscences of the rural scenes from which she has been taken. In the next scene she speaks to the court ladies recounting to them an incident in her past life in which she praises the kindness and love of her betrothed:

"As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
So is my beloved among the sons.
I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
And his fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting-house,
And his banner over me was love."

She reminds the court ladies that love is an affection that comes spontaneously and should not be aroused artificially. She makes an impassioned plea to them to let innocent, natural love have its way. This plea is made three times in the drama and may well be taken to express its central idea:

"I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes and the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up nor awaken love
Until it please."

In the first scene of the second act (II:8–17), the Shulamite tells of a visit which her lover paid to her in her rural home in the springtime, and of the beautiful spring song he sang to her:

"My beloved spake and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past;
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,
And the vines are in blossom;
They give forth their fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one, come away.

O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks,
In the covert of the steep place,
Let me see thy countenance,
Let me hear thy voice;
For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely."

She reaffirms her devotion to her lover and wishes that the end of their separation may be near:

"My beloved is mine, and I am his:
He feedeth his flock among the lilies.
Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart
Upon the mountains of Bether."

In the second scene of this act the Shulamite narrates a dream which she has had since she has been with the royal company. She had seemed to go through the city in search of her absent lover and to her joy she found him. The dream reflects her waking feelings and the recital of it to the ladies of the chorus is the poet's method of making known her emotions. This scene closes appropriately with a repetition of the appeal to the daughters of Jerusalem:

"I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love
Until it please."

The scene now changes (act 3, sc. 1). Solomon and his court have come back to Jerusalem, bringing the beautiful Shulamite maiden with them. He will cure her of her love for the shepherd by separation; besides he will dazzle her with the grand ceremony of their entrance into Jerusalem so that she may appreciate the honor awaiting her if she yields and becomes the king's bride. In the second scene of the third act (IV: 1–7), Solomon tries to win the maiden by profuse flattery.

"Behold thou art fair, my love; Behold, thou art fair;
Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil.
Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy mouth is comely.
Thou art all fair, my love;
And there is no spot in thee."

The next scene, consisting of the remaining verses of chapter four and the first verse of chapter five, presents an ideal interview between the Shulamite and her absent lover. She recites to the court ladies an imaginary invitation from her lover and her reply, followed by his grateful response. In scene four of this act she relates a dream of the past night (V:2–8). While she slept she thought she heard the footsteps of her lover outside; he bade her open the door; she delayed; he went away; she rose up and followed him; the watchmen took her for an evil woman and wounded her. She wakes and finds that it was but a fearful dream, yet the memory of it haunts her and impels her to make a fresh avowal of her love.

"I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
If ye find my love,
That ye tell him that I am sick of love."

The first scene of the fourth act (to VI:3) is a dialogue between the Shulamite and the daughters of Jerusalem respecting her lover. They are surprised at her persistent refusal of the king and her unfailing devotion to her absent lover, and they question her:

"What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
O thou fairest among women?
What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
That thou dost so adjure us?"

She replies in an enraptured description of her lover. The portrait is strained, perhaps to us a little crude, but we must make allowance for Oriental imagery:

"My beloved is white and ruddy,
The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is as the most fine gold;
His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves beside the water-brooks,
Washed with milk and fitly set.
His cheeks are as a bed of spices,
As banks of sweet herbs:
His lips are as lilies, dropping liquid myrrh.
His hands are as rings of gold set with beryl:
His body is as ivory work overlaid with sapphires.
His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.
His aspect is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

His mouth is most sweet;
Yea, he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem."

This glowing portrait evidently pleases the ladies of the court for they ask that they may be permitted to aid her in seeking for him.

In the second scene (VI: 4–13) Solomon again appears and renews his attempts to win the affections of the Shulamite maiden by praising her beauty and promising her the exceptional honor of being made the head of the harem, the chief of them all:

"There are three score queens and four score concubines,
And virgins without number.
My dove, my undefiled, is but one;
The daughters saw her, and called her blessed;
Yea, the queens and the concubines, they praised her."

The king then recalls the occasion when he first met the Shulamite in the nut orchard and repeats the conversation which he then heard between her and the ladies of the court, beginning with their greeting to her:

"Who is this that looketh forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
Terrible as an army with banner?"

Scene three (VII: 1–9) gives an account of Solomon's request that the beautiful maiden dance before him. As she dances he praises her nimble feet, her graceful movements, and her beautiful form in words of warm effusiveness, hoping by this flattery to win her favor. Her answer is the same old reply of unswerving devotion to her shepherd lover:

"I am my beloved's;
And his desire is toward me.
Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields;
Let us lodge in the villages;
Let us go up early to the vineyard;
Let us see whether the vine hath budded,
And its blossom is open,
And the pomegranates are in flower:
There will I give thee my love.

The mandrakes give forth fragrance;
And at our doors are all manner of precious fruits, new and old
Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved."

We may imagine that she speaks these lines with peculiar emphasis as this is her last repulse of the king. She concludes her answer with the repetition of the refrain of the drama:

"I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken my love,
Until it please."

In the closing scene (act 5, sc. 1) love has won. The maiden returns from Jerusalem leaning on the arm of her shepherd lover. They are welcomed by the shepherds of Shulem and the Shulamite maiden points out to her lover the dear scenes of his early life and of their courtship, and sings to him a song of the irresistible power of true love:

"Set me as a seal upon thy heart,
As a seal upon thy arm:
For love is stronger than death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave;
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
A very flame of Jehovah.
Many waters can not quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
He would utterly be contemned."

The two step-brothers of the Shulamite maiden are present, and looking upon her with suspicion, they speak of their former plans for her welfare. She answers them declaring that she has fulfilled their best expectations. The lover asks for a song and she responds as they go hand in hand over the well-remembered hills.

Comment.

It will have been seen that the Song lends itself to dramatic interpretation although it is true that much of the poetry in the book is lyrical in character. There is dialogue, action, and character presentation, constituting a rudimentary kind of plot. There is not the chronologi-

cal sequence nor the regular development of the ordinary drama; in fact, in several passages the speakers acquaint the hearers with incidents of their previous lives by introducing passages supposed to have been spoken at times before the drama opens. This is a somewhat unusual device; but any drama must have some devices more or less artificial.

Some critics have thought that the poem is out of place in the Bible unless it is given an allegorical meaning. But surely it is possible to teach lessons of beauty and righteousness without telling the reader over and over again that he must not forget the moral of the story. That story is worthy which presents well the moral forces of life. Here we have a story of the battle between love and ambition, and love is put first; it is made to come off victor; so pure love will always be triumphant over the allurements of vanity, splendor, and power. We are shown that genuine love is spontaneous; it can not be purchased; it can not be quenched by many waters. Even King Solomon can not buy love; it is a gift of God himself and is, therefore, to be held sacred.

Of the beautiful poetry of the Song Canon Driver writes: "The poetry of the Song is exquisite. The movement is graceful and light; the imagery is beautiful, and singularly picturesque, and the author revels among the delights of the country; one scene after another is brought before us—doves hiding in the clefts of the rocks or resting beside the water-brooks, gazelles leaping over the mountains or feeding among the lilies, goats reclining on the sloping hills of Gilead; trees with their varied foliage; flowers with bright hues or richly scented perfume are ever supplying the poet with fresh picture or comparison; we seem to walk with the shepherd-lover himself among the vineyards and fig trees in the balmy air of spring, or to see the fragrant, choicely furnished garden which the charms of his betrothed called up before his imagination."

BOOKS OUTSIDE THE CANON

CHAPTER XV

THE OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

The word Apocrypha means literally "secret" or "hidden," and was applied first to books or manuscripts laid away because they were worn out or were defective. Later the term was used to designate books defective in orthodoxy, and this is its meaning to-day when applied to the non-canonical books of the Old Testament. The Hebrews declare that there are only thirty-nine authentic books in the Old Testament, and that they were written in Hebrew and at a time long before the non-canonical ones were written. It is clear that the apocryphal books were, with the exception of a few parts, written originally in Greek. Altogether there are at least forty apocryphal books of the Old Testament, but only fourteen of these books and parts of books are accepted to-day by the Roman Catholic Church as belonging to the canonical Scriptures. It is evident that these fourteen and a few others were ranked as sacred writings in the early centuries of the Christian era because in the copies of the Septuagint Bible dating from the fourth century, these apocryphal books are mingled indiscriminately with the other books, Second Chronicles being followed by Esdras 1 and 2; Nehemiah, by Tobit and Judith; and the Song of Solomon, by Ecclesiasticus and The Wisdom of Solomon. The following are the fourteen separate parts of the Apocrypha as found in the Roman Catholic canon:

Esdras 1: made up mainly of extracts from 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Its original part is a legend of a trial of wisdom in debate between Zerubbabel and two other young men before Darius, king of Persia.

Esdras 2: apocalyptic literature, the message being in the form of visions. These visions appeared to Ezra

through the medium of the angel Uriel in the thirtieth year after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans.

The Book of Tobit: it contains a narrative of the piety, misfortunes, and final prosperity of Tobit, an exile in Nineveh.

The Book of Judith: it relates the exploits of Judith, a Jewish widow distinguished alike for her beauty, courage, and devotion to her country. She killed Holofernes, general of Nebuchadnezzar, and freed Bethulia in Judea.

Additions to the Book of Esther: these consist of six chapters, and nine additional verses added to chapter 10.

The Wisdom of Solomon: Solomon being to the ancient Hebrews the representative of all wisdom, the author of this book personates Solomon and speaks in his name.

Ecclesiasticus: the Greek title is "The Wisdom of Sirach." It is a copious book, rich in its content, embracing the whole domain of practical wisdom.

Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah: this book is formed after the model of Jeremiah, and is ascribed to his friend Baruch.

Three additions to the Book of Daniel: the Song of the Three Holy Children in the Fiery Furnace; The History of Susanna; and the Story of Bel and the Dragon. The first is found in the third chapter of Daniel and is a song of some power and beauty. The two other parts are discussed at some length later in this chapter.

The Prayer of Manasses: this is given as a prayer by Manasses, king of Judah, when he was a captive in Babylon.

Maccabees 1: this book is a narrative of the long and bloody struggle of the Jews under their Maccabean leaders against their Assyrian oppressors.

Maccabees 2: this book opens with two letters purporting to have been written by the Jews of Palestine to their brethren in Egypt. To these letters is appended an epitome of the five books of Jason of Cyrene, containing the history of the Maccabean struggle from about 180 B. C. to 161 B. C.

The limits of this chapter will not allow a discussion of all these books, interesting as they are. But brief

accounts will be given of Ecclesiasticus, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Judith and Tobit.

Ecclesiasticus.

This book may be said to be intermediate between the exclusive Jewish thought and the thought of the Gentile world; intermediate also between sacred and secular literature. The date of Ecclesiasticus is about 200 B. C. In its structure it is divided into four books; all four rich in thought. There is vigor and vim, a clearness and force that is refreshing. The thoughtful and beautiful monologue on Wisdom in Ecclesiastes finds a parallel here in the preface to the second book. Wisdom is described as the breath of the Most High, as covering the earth like a mist, throned in the pillared cloud, moving in loneliness over the circling heavens and the bottomless abyss, until the Creator bids her take up her tabernacle in Jacob.

In the wisdom literature of the canonical Bible special attention is given to the sluggard; at him a multitude of maxims are aimed; but in this book the fool takes the place of the sluggard. "Lay not thyself down for a fool to tread on." "The heart of fools is in their mouth; but the mouth of the wise is in their heart." "He that teaches a fool is as one that glueth a potsherd together." These are good examples of the terse and trenchant sayings of the book. Others are: "Seven days are the days of mourning for the dead; but for a fool and an ungodly man, all the days of his life;" "The heart of a fool is as a cart wheel and his thoughts like a rolling axletree."

We are taught the evils of pride and vanity: "Glory not in the putting on of raiment and exalt not thyself in the day of honor." "Commend not a man for his beauty, and abhor not a man for his outward appearance; the bee is little among such as fly, and her fruit is the chief of sweet-meats."

The proverbs of all nations are full of advice concerning the use of the tongue. It is said to be the most unruly, the most dangerous of all the members of the

body. The son of Sirach tells us: "A slip on the pavement is better than a slip with the tongue; so the fall of the wicked shall come speedily." "A lie is a foul blot in a man; it will be continually in the mouth of the ignorant." "A thief is better than a man that is continually lying."

"A whisperer defileth his own soul,
And shall be hated wheresoever he sojourneth."

"Many have fallen by the edge of the sword;
Yet not so many as they that have fallen by the tongue."

There is a very charming sentence about friendship: "A faithful friend is a medicine of life." In speaking further of friendship the wise man says: "Sweet words will multiply a man's friends, and a fair-speaking tongue will multiply courtesies. Let those that are at peace with thee be many, but thy counselors, one of a thousand."

There are some exquisitely naïve suggestions on table manners. The one at table is advised not to be greedy, not to reach across the table, not to fall over himself in the dish when he dips for anything. "Stretch not thy hand whithersoever it looketh, and thrust not thyself with it into the dish." "Consider thy neighbor's liking by thine own." "If thou sittest among many, reach not out thy hand before them." "Be first to leave off for manner's sake." We are told, too, that it is very bad manners to talk while music is going on: "Hinder not music; pour not out talk where there is a performance of music."

The topic of woman is variously treated. The wise man assumes a lordly superiority over women in general. He considers all women as available but not all equally worth having. "A woman will receive any man; but one daughter is better than another," he declares. Still he says graceful and good things about woman and her influence over man: "Forego not a wise and good wife, for her grace is above gold." Yet he charges that "All malice is but little to the malice of a woman." Evidently a woman of few words is to his liking: "As the going up a sandy way is to the feet of the aged, so is a

wife full of words to a quiet man"; and yet more strongly: "A silent woman is a gift from the Lord." He would encourage her in self-control: "Hast thou heard a word? let it die with thee: be of good courage, it will not burst thee." The words on filial duty are particularly beautiful:

> My son, help thy father in his old age; and grieve him not as long as he liveth. And if he fail in understanding, have patience with him; and dishonor him not while thou art in thy full strength. For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten; and instead of sins it shall be added to build thee up In the day of thine affliction it shall remember thee; as fair weather upon ice, so shall thy sins also melt away. He that forsaketh his father is as a blasphemer; and he that provoketh his mother is cursed of the Lord.

The teachings of this book of wisdom do not square with modern ideas of child training. Evidently the son of Sirach did not believe in the modern "flowery beds of ease" theory of education. Here is his blunt dictum: "Bow down his neck in his youth, and beat him on the sides while he is a child, lest he wax stubborn and disobedient unto thee."

It may not be intentional, but the Bible appears to poke fun at the physicians. In II Chronicles XVI: 12, we have these words: "And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet until his disease was exceeding great; yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." There is a full stop in the story and the next paragraph begins: "And Asa slept with his fathers." No comment is necessary. The son of Sirach says, "Honor a physician according to the need of him with honors due unto him; for verily the Lord hath created him"—as if there were some doubt about it. But the most unkindest cut of all is given when the wise man is seeking for some peculiar punishment to inflict upon the very wicked man. This is his decree: "He that sinneth before his Maker, let him fall into the hands of the physician."

THE STORY OF SUSANNA

Daniel is the hero of the History of Susanna. His shrewdness discovers a plan to thwart the wicked con-

spiracy against the good name and life of Susanna. Susanna was the wife of Joacim, a wealthy Babylonian Jew, and was a most beautiful woman. Her husband had a fair garden adjoining his house, and here she was accustomed to walk daily. Two of the ancients of the people, who were judges, came regularly to the house of Joacim to try the causes that were referred to them. They saw the beautiful Susanna go into the garden often, and "they were both wounded with her love." At last when they found her alone in the garden they made shameless proposals to her but she repulsed them in scorn. Her outcry brought about the discovery of the two elders and they, in order to save themselves, publicly accused Susanna of adultery with a young man whom they said they found in the garden. She was tried and condemned to death. When the time of execution came Susanna cried out with a loud voice and said, "O, everlasting God, that knowest the secrets and knowest all things before they be, thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me, and behold I must die; whereas I never did such things as these men have maliciously invented against me."

Then Daniel appeared and declared to the people that if they would return again to the place of judgment he would show them that Susanna had been condemned by false witnesses. They all returned and Daniel demanded that the two witnesses should be separated for the examination. He examined them thus separately and found that their stories did not agree. So Susanna's life was saved and the two elders were put to death. It is declared that from that day forth Daniel had great reputation among the people.

BEL AND THE DRAGON

The story of Bel and the Dragon is another account of Daniel and his wisdom, and his success in the detection of deceit and wrong. The scene is laid in the days of Cyrus the Great of Persia, when he ruled in Babylon. The frauds practiced by the priests of the god Bel are not very deep or mysterious. The story is no doubt founded upon facts as the deception practiced here is

one of the simplest of many that the priests of the old religions made use of to mystify the people in their ignorance.

King Cyrus and the Babylonians worshiped a great idol, Bel, and presented to him every day offerings of twelve great measures of fine flour, forty sheep and six vessels of wine. Daniel refused to worship this god and told Cyrus that it was clay within and brass without, and did never eat or drink anything. So the king called together the priests and told them that unless they could show him who devoured these gifts their lives should pay the penalty. But if they could certify that Bel did really eat the offerings, then Daniel should die. So the tables were covered with offerings and the temple door was shut and sealed with the king's seal.

In the morning Daniel and the king went to the temple and found the seals unbroken. As soon as they had opened the door, the king looked upon the table and cried with a loud voice, "Great art thou, O Bel, and with thee is no deceit at all!" Then Daniel laughed and holding the king back from going in, said, "Behold now the pavement and mark well whose footsteps are these." For Daniel had before this time caused the floor of the temple to be strewn with fine ashes, so that when the seventy priests and their families came into the temple by a private door, as was their custom, and went about helping themselves to all the good things presented, they made tracks on the floor everywhere. When the king saw the footsteps and knew that he had been deceived, he was very angry. He put the priests to death and delivered over the idol and temple into the hands of Daniel and he destroyed them.

In the same place there was a great dragon which the Babylonians worshiped. Daniel told the king that he could slay this dragon without sword or staff, and the king gave him leave. Then Daniel took pitch and fat and hair, and seethed them together and made them into lumps which he put into the dragon's mouth; and when they were swollen the dragon burst asunder; and Daniel said: "Lo, these be the gods ye worship." And when the people learned of all these doings of Daniel

and that the king's sympathy was with him, they demanded that he should be given into their hands else they would destroy the king. So the king gave up Daniel to them and they cast him into a den where there were seven lions, and there he remained six days. Now there was a man in Jewry whose name was Habbacuc who one day was taking dinner out to the reapers in the field, and the angel of the Lord took him by the hair of his head and set him down in Babylon over the den of lions, and he gave the food to Daniel. On the seventh day the king came to look in the den. When he found Daniel alive he was greatly surprised. He drew him out and thrust his accusers into the den, where they were devoured at once.

THE STORY OF JUDITH

The story of Judith is somewhat like that of Jael, the slayer of Sisera, though there is more of the heroic in the latter story. Judith, the heroine, is a much more admirable character than Jael, the wife of Heber. She shows the same spirit that has immortalized Joan of Arc. A Spartan mother said to her son who complained that his sword was too short, "Add a step to it." "Return with your shield or on it," said another Spartan mother to the boy she was sending to the field. There is no sex in heroism. Among the hundreds of noble heroines whose names adorn the pages of history Judith deserves a high place.

In the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchodonosor, who reigned in Nineveh, the great city, he sent out a proclamation that the countries to the west should send troops to him to assist him in his war against Arphaxad, the king of Ecbatane. Some of the western countries refused to respond to this levy. So when the king had defeated Arphaxad he sent his armies against the western nations to punish them for their disobedience. These armies he put under the charge of his chief captain, Holofernes, who attacked the city of Bethulia where the Israelites were shut up for safety. He soon cut off their supplies and left them destitute. So great was their distress that the people began to clamor for

peace with the Assyrians, declaring that they had rather die by the sword than of starvation and thirst. The governors of the city promised the people that if they would agree to hold out five days longer they should have their wish, unless help should come in the meantime. Now when Judith, who was a widow of goodly countenance and beautiful to behold, heard the promises made to the people, she called together the rulers of the city and said, "Hear me, and I will do a thing which shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation. Ye shall stand this night in the gate, and I will go forth with my waiting woman, and within the days that ye have promised to deliver the city to our enemies the Lord will visit Israel by my hand. But inquire ye not of mine act; for I will not declare it unto you, till the things be finished that I do."

So Judith went forth from the city to the Assyrian camp having put on all her ornaments and decked herself bravely to allure the eyes of all the men that should see her. When she reached the camp of Holofernes she told the guards that she had fled from Bethulia to save her life, for she felt sure that the Hebrews would be defeated. So beautiful was she and such an impression did she make that the soldiers formed a triumphal procession to conduct her to the tent of their general. Holofernes set aside for her a lovely tent close to his own and here she remained four days except that she had received permission to go beyond the Assyrian camp toward Bethulia every night at midnight to offer prayer. This she did in preparation for the strategy which she was to use later.

On the fourth day Holofernes invited Judith to a feast in his tent. At the end of the feast they two were left alone in the tent. Holofernes was then so drunk that he was lying on the bed in a stupor. The statement is made that he had drunk more that day than he had ever drunk in any day in all his life. Judith had commanded her maid to stand outside the tent to await her coming for their journey to the accustomed place of prayer. Then she seized the sword of Holofernes which was hanging at the head of his bed, took hold of the hair of his head, and praying for strength, smote twice upon

his neck and cut off his head. She tumbled his body down from the bed, put his head in the bag in which she was accustomed to carry her food, and left the camp as if to pray at the accustomed place. But she did not stop to pray; she went on to the city of Bethulia and with great joy informed the rulers of the city of what she had done. The Israelites formed their companies for attack and at once fell upon the Assyrian camp. The Assyrians resisted bravely at first but when they went to rouse their general that he might lead them, they found his headless body on the floor of the tent; then panic seized them and they fled in disorder and there followed a great slaughter.

After the victory all the people of Israel came unto Judith, blessed her with one accord, and said unto her,

> Thou art the exaltation of Jerusalem, thou art the great glory of Israel, thou art the rejoicing of our nation.

Then all the women of Israel ran together to see Judith and blessed her and made a dance among them for her. They put a garland of olives upon her and her maid that was with her; then she went before all the people in the dance, leading all the women; and all the men of Israel followed in their armor with garlands and with songs in their mouths.

The Book of Tobit

The scene of the action in Tobit is in Nineveh. The characters are Tobit, a pious Hebrew, Anna, his wife, Tobias their son, a young man Raphael, an angel; Raguel, Tobit's cousin of Media, Sarah his daughter, a beautiful maiden, and Edna his wife. Ruth is a story of great sweetness and simple power; Esther is a thrilling story that grips the attention; but Tobit is a tale which, in its naïve simplicity, surpasses them both. It is a story of marvelous providences, supernatural happenings, and angelic ministrations; of faithful devotion to religious duty, and simple, loving family life.

The first part of the story is told by the father, Tobit, with simple profuseness. He had always been obedient

to the laws of his people, and now that he is a captive in a foreign land he does not forget his religious obligations nor his duty to his poor brethren. He risks his life time and again by burying those of his brethren who have fallen victims to the cruel tyrants under whom they live. One night while he was sleeping in the open air because of uncleanness from burying a murdered brother Hebrew, his eyes were blinded by sparrow's dung falling from the tree under which he slept. His blindness renders him helpless and he must depend upon his nephew and the labor of his wife Anna for his support. Tobit in his helplessness becomes irritable and quarrels with Anna who reproaches him declaring that his blindness has come upon him on account of his sins. He is deeply humiliated by such accusations and prays that he may die; but before he leaves the world he must settle up his affairs and he remembers that once when he was an exile from Nineveh he left a sum of money in a city of Media in charge of a friend. This he must have; so he calls to him his son Tobias and, after giving him the customary fatherly advice, directs him to go to Media to get this sum of money. They look for a guide, and a young man calling himself Azarias offers his services. To this guide Tobit commits his son.

On their way the two travelers stop by the river Tigris and when the young man goes down to the river to wash himself a great fish leaps up out of the water and attempts to swallow the youth. But Azarias, who was really the angel Raphael, cried to him to grapple the fish boldly and cast it out on the land. This he did; and at the command of the angel he cut the fish open and took out its heart, liver, and gall, and preserved them for future use. Tobias was curious to know the value of these parts of the fish which he had preserved; the angel's reply was that a smoke made from the heart and liver would drive away any evil spirit; and that the gall was a certain cure for blinded eyes.

When the two came near the town of Rages, the angel told Tobias that he was going to find a wife for him there, Sarah the daughter of a kinsman. Now Tobias was not very well pleased with the idea of marrying Sarah, for he

had heard that she had already married seven husbands and that each one in turn was found dead in the bride-chamber. He pleaded that he was the only son of his father and did not like to run such a great risk. The explanation of the violent death of the seven husbands was that a devil was in love with Sarah and killed every man that married her.

At last the two travelers arrived at the home of Raguel and were received most kindly. The story sets forth in a very charmng way the greetings given the visitors, the inquiries about the homes of the young men, and about Tobit and Anna in Ninevah. Few stories have more natural touches of love, sympathy, and pathos. When Tobias looked upon Sarah he was so delighted with her that he eagerly whispered to Azarias that he was perfectly willing to run the risks that had so frightened him at first and had proved so fatal to the unfortunate seven, and asked him to speak to the family of his wishes. All arrangements were made in a short time and they were married that night. It was Sarah's fond hope that Tobias would redeem her from the power of the evil spirit that tormented her. Azarias instructed Tobias that when he went to the bridal chamber he should put the heart and liver of the fish on the incense plate and make a smoke of them. He was obedient to his instructions and when the devil smelled the smoke he fled into the uttermost parts of Egypt and remained there, and Sarah was freed from his malignant power.

Now, Raguel, Sarah's father, had become so accustomed to digging a grave and burying a victim on the morning after each wedding that he went out this morning and digged the eighth grave. He expected to bury Tobias alongside his seven other sons-in-law. But the maidservant sent on a mission of inquiry, brought the welcome news that Tobias was alive and well; and with great satisfaction Raguel filled up the new-made grave. After the wedding feast was over Tobias and Sarah and Azarias all went back to Nineveh to the home of Tobit. Tobit and Anna had become very much alarmed at the protracted stay of Tobias and so were overjoyed when they saw him coming. As soon as he had embraced his

father he applied a portion of the gall of the fish which he had preserved, to his blinded eyes and they were restored to sight at once. Tobit was so pleased with the results of the journey of Tobias that he offered Azarias the guide, a large reward for his services. Then it was that Azarias declared that he was Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, and had undertaken this service because Tobit had shown himself to be a pious and devout man. The father and son were so troubled when they knew that they were in the presence of an angel that they fell upon their faces, and when they arose the angel was gone. Then Tobit uttered this prayer of rejoicing:

"Let my soul bless God the great King,
For Jerusalem shall be builded with
Sapphires and emeralds and precious stones;
The walls and towers and battlements with pure gold.
And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with
Beryl and carbuncle and stones of Ophir.
And all her streets shall say, Hallelujah, and give praise,
Saying, Blessed is God, which hath exalted thee forever."

APPENDIX

SECTION 1

GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE

In connection with his reading every student of the Bible should study a map of Palestine. Fairly good maps may be found in most copies of the Bible, but the careful student may desire one that is larger and more satisfactory. The location of a great many places mentioned in the narratives is a matter of conjecture because so many of the ancient landmarks were obliterated centuries ago. It will be found, therefore, that maps differ in their location of the division lines of the tribal possessions, in the location of towns and of other places of interest. This is the case because too many makers of maps rely to a considerable extent upon conjecture in locating places that are obscurely referred to in the text. But the maps usually found in Bibles are accurate enough for all practical purposes, and are invaluable aids in getting clear and definite mental pictures of the places and events described. Before the student is able to read intelligently his knowledge of the geography of Palestine should enable him to locate the countries which lie on its borders; the chief mountains, as Mt. Hermon, on the northern border; Mt. Carmel, near the coast; Mt. Tabor, Mt. Gilboa, Mt. Ebal, and Mt. Gerizim, near the center; Mt. Pisgah and Mt. Nebo, northeast of the Dead Sea; and Mt. Sinai or Horeb, in Arabia. He should be able to locate the chief towns, also, as Dan, Jezreel, Dothan, Shechem, Samaria, Shiloh, Bethel, Jericho, Gibeon, Mizpah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Gaza, and Hebron. He should be able, too, to locate the homes of the different tribes, as Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe Manasseh, east of the Jordan; Ephraim, in the center of the west-Jordan country, with Manasseh on its northern and Dan and Benjamin on its southern border; Judah, south of Benjamin, and Asher and Naphtali, in the far north.

If by the name Palestine we mean the land of Israel's history, it is not possible to think of fixed boundaries; but the traditional boundaries are pretty well defined. Palestine is a country of southwestern Asia, comprising the southern portion of Syria, and bounded on the west by the Mediter-

ranean Sea, on the north by the mountain ranges of Lebanon, and on the south and east by the desert. The area is 10,000 square miles, West Palestine having 6,000 and East Palestine, 4,000 square miles. Its length from the source of the Jordan to Beersheba is 143 miles; to the city of Kadesh Barnea, 187 miles. The width varies from 112 miles at the south to 47 miles at the north. According to elevation and character of surface, Palestine is divided into four regions or strips running north and south: the Maritime Plain, the Central Range, the Jordan Valley, and the Eastern Range. The first is a plain along the coast from five to twenty-five miles wide. It is of marked fertility and includes the plains of Esdraelon, Sharon, and Philistia. Adjoining the Philistine plain is the Shephelah, a hilly region which curves round this plain from Gaza to Jaffa like a great amphitheater, cut by three or four great gaps. It is a region of unusual interest and importance in the history of Palestine and has an elevation of from 500 to 1,500 feet above the level of the sea.

The Central Range, the backbone of the country, is really a continuous range of hills and mountains, though broken by cross-valleys. In the north are the uplands of Galilee, in the center, the hills and plains of Samaria, and in the south, the lofty highlands of Judea.

From the Central Range the descent east to the Jordan Valley is very rapid. This valley is really a deep gorge, the deepest depression in the world. The Jordan river takes its rise at the foot of Mt. Hermon, 705 feet above the level of the sea, and flowing through Lake Merom and the Sea of Genessaret empties into the Dead Sea. The length of the channel from its source to its mouth is 250 miles, although a straight course is only 135 miles. The fountain spring of the Jordan is 705 feet above, while the Sea of Genessaret is 682 feet, and the Dead Sea, 1,292 feet below, sea level. The Jordan Valley varies in width, character of surface, and fertility. In the north it is four miles wide and very fertile, in the last part of its course it is fifteen miles wide, and alkaline and arid. The Dead Sea basin is but the continuation of the Jordan cleft, in fact, its deepest part. It is forty-seven miles long and ten miles wide, and has a maximum depth of 1,300 feet. To the east of the Jordan Valley rises the east-Jordan plateau comprising the countries Edom, Moab, Gilead, and Bashan. This plateau is about 150 miles long from Mt. Hermon on the north to the south end of the Dead Sea; its width from the edge of the Jordan Valley to the edge of the desert, varies from thirty to eighty miles. The

elevation averages 2,000 feet above the level of the sea; so it has a temperate climate. This region varies greatly in soil and features but is in general hilly, well watered, and well adapted to grazing.

Palestine is a land of great extremes in climate and natural features. From the north to the south there is a difference of elevation of 10,468 feet, Mt. Hermon in the north having a height of 9,166 feet and the Dead Sea being 1,292 feet below sea level. There is every kind of climate from the sub-tropical of Jericho to the sub-Alpine of Lebanon. From Mt. Carmel may be seen at one sweep all the intervening climatic steps—the sands and plains of the coast, the wheat fields of Esdraelon, the oaks and sycamores of Galilee, the pines, peaks, and eternal snows of Hermon. In its physical configuration Palestine is an epitome of the whole world. The great variety of climate and natural features produces a corresponding diversity in the plant and animal life. There are said to be 113 species of mammals, 348 of birds, 91 of reptiles and amphibia, and more than 3,000 kinds of flowering plants.

In many other ways Palestine is a land of contrasts. While it is almost entirely shut off from the world outside the great highways of the East pass through it. On the east and south it is bordered by the desert like a great wall of insulation, on the west by the almost unnavigable Mediterranean which offers no great harbor on the whole coast of Palestine. Only on the north is the land accessible though even there the mountains reach across like a natural bar. Within the land, also, almost everywhere are mountains with deep, abrupt gorges, making intercourse very difficult. This isolation naturally developed individuality among the people and shielded them from the influences of that great leveler, commerce.

But that nation which has a great work to do in the world must not only be protected from a weakening cosmopolitanism, it must be preserved from influences that would make it narrow, stubborn, and inhospitable. Israel was preserved from this danger, for while the land was insulated, it was at the same time a great highway of world commerce. Indeed all the ancient highways of trade ran through Palestine: That primitive one from the Nile to the Euphrates, running the entire length of Palestine and touching at Damascus; the one connecting Tyre with the Arabian Gulf; another from beyond Mesopotamia passing through Damascus, the plain of Esdraelon, Samaria, Jerusalem, Beersheba, and on to Egypt; and still that other one from Elath, on the Red Sea, running north through Moab, Ammon, and Gilead to Damascus.

Thus the inhabitants of Palestine were guaranteed the undisturbed development of their individuality, while they caught glimpses of the myriad-hued world as it swept past them in caravans of commerce and armies of conquest.

SECTION 2

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF HEBREW HISTORY

Hebrew history before the Christian era may be divided into nine general periods: (1) the period of the Patriarchs; (2) the period of the Judges (———1037); (3) the United Kingdom (1037–937); (4) the Divided Kingdom (937–586); (5) the period of the Exile (586–538); (6) the Persian period (538–332); (7) the Greek period (332–164); (8) the Maccabean period (164–63); (9) the Roman period (63 B. C. –400 A. D.).

1. The period of the Patriarchs can not be limited by any exact dates; but about 1500 B. C. a party of emigrants from Mesopotamia set out for Palestine under the leadership of Abraham who had, a few years before, emigrated with his father Terah from Chaldea. This pioneer hero, by his life, established such standards of honor, righteousness, and faith that his achievements have become the permanent possession of the world and material for the ideals of the multitude of his descendants. He was succeeded in leadership by his son Isaac, Isaac by Jacob, and Jacob in turn by Joseph. The long period of bondage in Egypt to which the Hebrews were subjected after the time of Joseph was ended by Moses. His work changed the character of the Hebrew commonwealth and ushered in the régime of the Judges.

2. The period of the Judges extended to the organization of the Kingdom under Saul. This may be called the age of heroes. As men were needed they were raised up; for there was an opportunity for the strongest and the fittest to come to the front, such men as Othneil, Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel. These judges were military dictators with religious authority, a sort of union of the warrior and the religious reformer. The nation was unorganized and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

3. The establishment of the Kingdom was not the result of a sudden impulse. After Gideon's successful campaigns as judge, the people wanted him to be king; Abimelech tried to assume kingly authority; and many judges set up a semi-royal state in imitation of the rulers of surrounding nations.

The example of other peoples, worldly ambition, and their satisfactory experiences under the wise, strong, and steady rule of Samuel, convinced the Hebrews that they ought to have a king. Saul was chosen king and ruled with indifferent success. David succeeded him, extended the kingdom, and gave strength and stability to the government. Under Solomon the Kingdom attained to great splendor outwardly, but within were the seeds of revolt.

4. The death of Solomon was followed by the revolt of Jeroboam and the division of the Kingdom. The people had petitioned Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor for relief from the burdens of taxation brought upon them by the splendor and extravagance of the government of Solomon. His answer to their petition was both foolish and insulting. So the northern tribes threw off their allegiance and set up a new kingdom with Jeroboam as their ruler. The northern kingdom was named Israel, the southern, Judah. The exact lines of division are not known, but in the southern kingdom were the old tribe of Judah and parts of two or three other tribes, while the remainder of the people adhered to the northern kingdom. The capital of the southern kingdom was Jerusalem, of the northern kingdom, Shechem and Tirza, and later Samaria. The government of Israel continued two hundred and sixteen years under nine dynasties of kings. Judah lasted one hundred and thirty years longer and was ruled by descendants of King David in direct succession, with the exception of the time of Athaliah's usurpation.

5. Israel was conquered and the people carried into captivity in the year 721 B. C. Judah was overcome and the people taken into captivity in 586. Israel was carried off by the Assyrians under Sargon; Judah by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar. The people of Israel never returned to their native land; but numbers of the people of Judah came back and lived as a nation for many years, though the country was subject to foreign rulers during most of its history. They went into exile a nation, they returned a church; deprived of political power, they developed their literature and codified their laws. Their exile changed them in many ways. They lost their language and many of their habits and characteristics. They were changed from farmers to merchants and traders. Not all of the exiled Jews returned to Palestine. More than half of them remained in foreign lands and formed "Ghettos" in the cities of the ancient world. These expatriated people were later called the "Jews of the Dispersion," or the "Grecian Jews."

6. The Persian period was an experiment of civic life for

a subject people in their own land. They rebuilt their capital and its temple, and lived under the rule of a Persian viceroy, who was sometimes one of their own princes. In this period Ezra promulgated a new edition of the law, Nehemiah built the walls of Jerusalem, relieved the poor from oppressive financial burdens, and suppressed marriages with foreigners.

7. Through the conquests of Alexander the Great, Judah came under Greek rule. The Ptolemies of Alexandria held control for over a century. They exercised both a political and an intellectual influence. Alexandria became a great center of Jewish thought and study, and constant intercourse with Jerusalem strengthened Judaism in both regions. In the year 203 B. C. Egyptian gave way to Syrian control under Antiochus III. This change of rulers brought to the Jews a change of treatment. The Syrian rulers undertook to compel them to renounce their religion. The temple was desecrated and left to fall in ruins, and the Jewish worshippers were tortured and slain in one of the most cruel persecutions of all history. Because of the loyalty of the Jews to their religion under the most inhuman persecutions, Antiochus determined to exterminate the whole nation. But the cruel oppression of the Syrians caused a new epoch of heroism to rise upon Israel.

8. The Maccabean period was a period of revolt against Assyrian oppression and cruelty. A noble priest Mattathias, in the year 167 B. C., unfurled the banner of independence and revolted from the Assyrian yoke. Five years later his son and successor, the great Judas Maccabaeus, recovered Jerusalem, purified the temple, and restored the ancient religion. In the year 141 B. C. Jewish liberty was formally recognized, and the Maccabean princes ruled for a time over an independent state.

9. In the year 63 B. C. Pompey the Great made Syria a Roman province with Judea as a subordinate part of the province. Thus Palestine, with other lands, became an integral part of the great Roman empire. In the years that followed there were revolts, but the Jews never gained a vestige of their former political freedom. Their condition remained unchanged during the first four centuries of the Christian era.

CHRONOLOGY OF BOOKS

SECTION 3

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AS ARRANGED IN HEBREW CHRONOLOGY

I. The Beginnings.
   1. The beginnings of the human race.—Genesis I–XI.
   2. The beginnings of the chosen people.—Genesis XII–L.

II. A Time of Testing and Trial.
   1. The escape from bondage.—Exodus.
   2. The discipline of the wilderness.—Numbers.
   3. The struggles of the conquest.—Joshua.
   4. Striving to find the right way.—Judges, Ruth.

III. Unity, Growth, and Prosperity.
   1. Seeking unity in organization and leadership.—1 Samuel.
   2. The United Kingdom under David.—2 Samuel.
   3. The United Kingdom under Solomon.—1 Kings, I–XI.

IV. Division and Decline.
   1. The Northern Kingdom.
      (1) Varying fortunes of the northern kingdom through 216 years under twenty kings.—1 Kings XII–2 Kings XVIII.
      (2) The voices of the prophets in instruction, prophecy, warning, and denunciation:

      Elijah (cir. 876)—The accusing prophet, a man of the desert. 1 Kings XVII–2 Kings II.

      Elisha (cir. 854)—The sympathetic prophet, a man among the people. 2 Kings II–XIII.

      Amos (cir. 750)—The shepherd prophet who (in the time of Jeroboam II) denounced the prosperous corruption of the kingdom. Book of Amos.

      Hosea (cir. 750)—A prophet who proclaimed God's unquenchable love for Israel. Book of Hosea.

2. The Southern Kingdom—Judah.
   (1) Victories and defeats of Judah through a period of 389 years, under twenty-two rulers, with government usually stable and the people loyal. 1 Kings XIV–2 Kings.
   (2) The voices of the Prophets:

Isaiah (cir. 740–690)—The renowned prophet who was a great statesman, a preacher of righteousness, and a great optimist proclaiming the gospel of hope. Book of Isaiah I–XXXIX.

Micah (cir. 720–708)—The prophet who in the time of Isaiah, from the standpoint of the peasants, denounced the cruelty and oppression of the rulers, priests, and prophets. Book of Micah.

Zephaniah (cir. 630–605)—A prophet who lived in the early days of Josiah and denounced the corrupt worship and the social injustice of the time. Book of Zephaniah.

Nahum (cir. 625)—A prophet of the latter days of Josiah's reign who pronounced the doom of Nineveh. Book of Nahum.

Habakkuk (cir. 605)—A prophet of the latter days of Josiah who denounced the cruelty, injustice, and idolatry of the Chaldeans who were to be God's instrument for punishing Judah, a people better than themselves. Book of Habakkuk.

Jeremiah (cir. 626–586)—A fearless preacher of truth who lived amid the stirring events of Josiah's reign, of the capture of Jerusalem and the deportation of the captives. Book of Jeremiah.

V. The Captivity of Judah.

1. With the Exile there came a break in the historical narratives of the Old Testament, but the period gave rise to several books of prophecy.
2. The Voices of the Prophets:

Lamentations (cir. 540)—Prophecies accredited to Jeremiah. They give descriptions of the sack of the city of Jerusalem, of the miserable estate of the exiles, and make appeals for deliverance and for vengeance on the oppressors. Book of Lamentations.

Obadiah (cir. 586)—A prophet who delivers bitter denunciations on Edom for its ill treatment of the Jews in the ruin of Judah. Book of Obadiah.

Ezekiel (cir. 592–570)—A young contemporary of Jeremiah who represents the transition from the prophet to the scribe or theologian of later days. In captivity himself, he first tried to destroy the false hopes of his fellow exiles in their return, but after the destruction of Jerusalem he proclaimed the promise of a more glorious kingdom. Book of Ezekiel.

The Second Isaiah (cir. 546–539)—The "great unknown" prophet who sounded a note of hope in the closing years of the Exile. The book is the culmination of Old Testament teaching and an approach to gospel revelation. Book of Isaiah XL–LXVI.

VI. The Return from the Exile (cir. 536–458).

1. The history of the return and the building of the city and temple, and the instituting of many social reforms. Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.
2. Esther—A book written probably about 350 B. C., but the events of which belong to the years soon after the return from exile. It is generally regarded as an allegory with a basis of historical fact, and is designed to encourage the Jews by showing how God protects his people and destroys their enemies.
3. The Voices of the Prophets:

Haggai (cir. 520) and Zechariah (cir. 520–518)—Two prophets who were commissioned to arouse the Jews to greater energy in rebuilding the temple. It is promised that the new temple shall be more glorious than that of Solomon. Books of Haggai and Zechariah.

Malachi (cir. 460–430)—A prophet who is interested particularly in the gifts and dues for the maintenance of the service of the temple, and the priesthood, showing clearly the transition from prophet to priest. Book of Malachi.

Joel (cir. 350)—A prophet who proclaims the coming of the day of the Lord as a season of terrible calamities from which Judah must be delivered by repentance; and this repentance

must be shown in a formal way, by weeping, fasting, and praying—other proofs of the change to formalism. Book of Joel.

Jonah (cir. 350)—This book is not a prophecy but an anonymous narrative which should probably be interpreted as a protest against the narrowness and bitterness of the spirit of Judah in this age. It teaches the wideness of God's mercy and would have Jonah learn the lesson of sympathy for other men and nations. Book of Jonah.

LIST OF STORIES

SECTION 4

LIST OF STORIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. The Creation, Genesis I–II, 3.
2. The Garden of Eden, Genesis II, 4–III.
3. Story of Cain and Abel, Genesis IV, 1–15.
4. The Story of the Flood, Genesis VI, 5–IX, 17.
5. The Tower of Babel, Genesis XI, 1–9.
6. The Call of Abraham, Genesis XI, 27–XII, 9.
7. Abraham and Lot, Genesis XIII–XIV.
8. The story of Hagar and Ishmael, Genesis XVI–XXI, 8–21.
9. The Covenant with Abraham, Genesis XVII.
10. The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis XVIII–XIX.
11. The Offering of Isaac, Genesis XXII, 1–19.
12. The Wooing of Rebekah, Genesis XXIV.
13. The Story of Esau and Jacob, Genesis XXV, 19–XXX.
14. Joseph and His Brethren, Genesis XXXVII; XXXIX–XLVII.
15. The Death of Jacob and Joseph, Genesis XLVIII–L.
16. Early Life of Moses, Exodus I–II.
17. The Call of Moses, Exodus III–IV.
18. The Oppression of the Israelites, Exodus V–VI.
19. The Ten Plagues, Exodus VI–XII.
20. Institution of The Passover, Exodus XII, 42–XIII, 16.
21. The Passage of the Red Sea, Exodus XIII, 17–XIV.
22. The Giving of the Ten Commandments, Exodus XIX–XX, 21.

23. Incident of the Golden Calf, Exodus XXXII.
24. The Attempt to Enter into Canaan, Numbers XIII–XIV.
25. The Story of Balak and Balaam, Numbers XXII–XXIV.
26. The Death of Moses, Deuteronomy XXXIV.
27. Rahab and the Spies, Joshua II.
28. Crossing the Jordan, Joshua III–IV.
29. The Siege of Jericho, Joshua VI.
30. Joshua at Gibeon, Joshua X.
31. The Death of Joshua, Joshua XXXIII–XXXIV.
32. The Defeat and Death of Sisera, Judges IV–V.
33. The Deeds of Gideon, Judges VI–VII.
34. The Story of Abimelech and Jotham, Judges IX.
35. The Deeds and Vow of Jephthah, Judges XI, 1–11, 30–XII.
36. The Life and Death of Samson, Judges XIII–XVI.
37. The Story of Ruth and Naomi, Ruth I–IV.
38. The Calling of Samuel, 1 Samuel III.
39. The Ark of the Covenant in Philistia, 1 Samuel IV–VI.
40. The Anointing of Saul, 1 Samuel VIII–X.
41. Jonathan and His Armorbearer, 1 Samuel XIV, 1–23.
42. Saul's Disobedience, 1 Samuel XV.
43. The Anointing of David, 1 Samuel XVI.
44. The Story of David and Goliath, 1 Samuel XVII–XVIII, 16.
45. The Friendship of David and Jonathan, 1 Samuel XVIII, 1–5; XX.
46. Stories of David and Saul, 1 Samuel XXI–XXIV; XXVI–XXVII, 4.
47. Saul and the Witch of Endor, 1 Samuel XXVIII.
48. Death of Saul and Jonathan, 1 Samuel XXI–2 Samuel I.
49. David Made King, 2 Samuel V.
50. The Story of David and Bathsheba, 2 Samuel XI–XII, 24.
51. Early Career of Absalom, 2 Samuel XIII–XIV, 24.
52. The Rebellion of Absalom, 2 Samuel XIV, 25–XVIII, 33.
53. The Devotion of Rizpah, 2 Samuel XXI, 1–14.
54. Solomon Made King, 1 Kings I, 11–53.
55. The Wisdom of Solomon, 1 Kings III, 5–28.
56. The Visit of the Queen of Sheba, 1 Kings X, 1–13.
57. Division of the Kingdom—Rehoboam and Jeroboam, 1 Kings XI, 26–XII, 24.
58. Stories of Elijah, 1 Kings, XVI–XIX.
59. Ahab Secures Naboth's Vineyard, 1 Kings XXI.
60. The Death of Ahab, 1 Kings XXII, 29–40.
61. The Translation of Elijah, 2 Kings II, 1–18.

62. Stories of Elisha, 1 Kings XXIX, 19–21; 2 Kings II–IV; VIII, 7–15; XIII, 14–21.
63. The Healing of Naaman the Leper, 2 Kings V.
64. Elisha and the Syrian King, 2 Kings VI, 8–23.
65. Elisha and the Siege of Samaria, 2 Kings VI, 24–VII, 20.
66. Jehu and Jezebel, 2 Kings IX.
67. Career of the Wicked Athaliah, 2 Kings XII.
68. The Destruction of Sennacherib, 2 Kings XVIII, 13–XIX, 37.
69. The Healing of Hezekiah, 2 Kings XX.
70. The Great Reform under Josiah, 2 Kings XXII–XXIII, 30.
71. The Call of Isaiah, Isaiah VI.
72. The Capture of Jerusalem, 2 Kings XXV.
73. Esther, a Drama of the Court, Esther I–X.
74. Daniel and His Three Friends, Daniel I.
75. Nebuchadnezzar's Forgotten Dream, Daniel II.
76. The Burning Fiery Furnace, Daniel III.
77. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of the Tree Cut Down, Daniel IV.
78. The Story of Belshazzar's Feast, Daniel V.
79. Daniel in the Den of Lions, Daniel VI.
80. The Story of Jonah, Book of Jonah.

SECTION 5

THE BIBLE STUDENT'S LIBRARY

First, the student must have a Bible dictionary. The best one is Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, five volumes, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, $6.00 a volume. The same author and publisher issue a single-volume dictionary at $5.00. Another good reference book is the Standard Dictionary of the Bible, in one volume, published by Funk & Wagnalls, New York.

Very useful special editions of the books of the Bible are the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, prices from 40 cents to $2.00 a volume, and the Modern Reader's Bible, edited by Dr. Richard G. Moulton, in modern literary form, and published by The Macmillan Company, in small volumes at 50 cents. There is also a single-volume edition at $3.00 and $5.00.

For a study of literary interpretation the following books are helpful:

"The Old Testament and Its Contents," by Prof. James

Robertson, D.D., published by the Fleming H. Revell Company, New York.

"The Bible as English Literature," by Prof. J. H. Gardner, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

"The Bible as Literature," by Dr. R. G. Moulton, published by D. C. Heath & Co., Boston.

Along with the study of the literature of the Bible must go the study of the history of the Hebrew people. For this study the following books are excellent and authoritative:

"Old Testament History," by H. P. Smith, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, $2.50.

"Old Testament History," by G. W. Wade, published by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, $1.50.

"History of the People of Israel," by C. H. Cornill, published by the Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, $1.50.

"How to Master the English Bible," by Rev. Dr. James M. Gray, published by the Winona Publishing Co., Chicago. (Particularly valuable for an elaboration of the suggestions found on pages 23 and 24 of this volume).

THE END

LUTHERAN SEMINARY LIBRARY, MAYWOOD, ILL.

BS605.A73
Armstrong

Mastering the books of the bible

13081

DATE | ISSUED TO

DEC 8 '48 | [illegible] DEC 8 '48

Library Bureau | Cat. no. 1174

P9-CXZ-966